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JACK WESTROPP

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

"Their breath is agitation, and their life
A storm whereon they ride,"—*Childe Harold*

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II.

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JACK WESTROPP.

CHAPTER I.

AN OASIS IN THE DESERT.

THE Christmas holidays had passed, and 1845 had dawned ; I had completed my twenty-seventh year ; Mrs. Twycross had presented her husband with a thriving son and heir ; “ and great events were on the gale.” Lofthouse’s marriage with Kate was fixed, as I have stated, for the first week of February ; and I need not say I looked forward with absorbing interest alike to that happy event, and to my *début* in Parliament, which was to follow it immediately.

It may seem strange to the reader, to whom I have so candidly revealed the weaker side of my nature, to learn that nothing agitated me so much at this period as my anxiety to improve on the oratorical reputation that had preceded me to Parliament. Though not free from vanity, I usually made it subordinate to self-interest ; but vanity and self-interest alike showed the necessity of my distinguishing myself in that great assembly. Now, this was by no means

an easy task. The House of Commons is notoriously a stumbling-block to speakers who have made their mark elsewhere. In addressing it, I know that I should have to bound suddenly from the torrid zone of patriotic eloquence to the arctic circle of parliamentary platitude. To-day, bellowing to the great unwashed—quoting Byron and Moore—raking up the wrongs of centuries—persuading my listeners that, if they were poor and squalid after years of idleness and drunkenness, or if their streets were dirty from being never swept, it was all the fault of the British Government ; next month, bowing with deference to the experience of the right honourable gentleman the head of the Ruled Foolscap Department, but begging to assure him with the greatest possible respect that Ballaghaderreen was not in the County Monaghan. Between these two styles there was a gulf, which it was not easy to bridge over, so as to pass at will from one to the other. Long experience had made me perfectly at home among the masses of my countrymen. I knew what pleased them, and I could soar at a moment's notice into tropes, metaphors, quotations, vehement remonstrance, earnest enthusiasm, heart-stirring peroration. Better still for a mob orator, I could silence interruption by turning the laugh against a rude opponent, and could bandy jokes with Mrs. Moriarty as freely as the Liberator himself. But how much would all this avail me in the frigid atmosphere of St. Stephen's ? How could I teach my unaccustomed tongue to " deprecate " the interference of the noble lord, or to denounce the proposal of the honourable gentleman as

“eminently inconvenient”? How could I be “free to admit” that “I had yet to learn” why the gallant baronet entertained such apprehensions at the course pursued by the Marylebone board, in supplying aged female paupers with snuff at the expense of the ratepayers? How should I guard against the unpardonable solecism of suddenly calling some honourable member by his real name? In a word, how was I to do my solemn fooling in the most stilted language possible? I had become notorious for the violence with which I had attacked the haughty Saxon oppressor. Could I wonder if he exulted with glee over my lapse into errors, which might be easily enough excused in an unknown and unpretentious man?

Shortly before Kate’s marriage there was a grand ball given at Munkitrick Hall. To Mrs. Mun, who was a mighty huntress of lords and notabilities, it was a matter of some importance that her invitations had been accepted by Lord Lofthouse and Kate, by myself and another Repeal member. As Count Taganrog, too, a Russian ambassador on his travels, and Sir Robert Tayle, C.B., had in some way been secured, it may be presumed that, between the presence of these titled folks, and a fair sprinkling of the military, the hostess’s heart was made happy. I smiled as I reflected on my almost surreptitious entry into those rooms two years before, decked out in the borrowed plumes of the veteran St. George. Since then, what mighty changes had taken place in my career! I looked pityingly on Ferdinand Munkitrick, with his eye-glass, and his stiff

neck, and his faultless cravat, and felt that during all that time he had been agitated by nothing more important than new clothes, new horses, new operas, new girls to ogle in Grafton Street and the squares. After all, I had lived the life of a man. The conversation I had had with Mr. O'Connell in that room had thrown me into the stormy ocean of Irish politics, and I had stoutly buffeted the waves therein. True, my career would not bear an over scrupulous examination. A political opponent had styled me, in the course of a bitter personal attack, "the Napoleon of insolvency." I accepted the epigram, and even the few instances I have given of my desperate struggles, and my rescue from perilous straits, may prove its justice. The scene with the Orangemen in the Rotunda had been my Leipsic; my retreat from the Marshalsea, like a more memorable one from Moscow, had been effected "so as by fire"; my heroism in braving the wrathful Fogarty in my Quaker garb might be called my Lodi; the marriage of Mary Anne Munkittrick had proved the Waterloo of my aspiring hopes of independence. But after all these dangers, reverses, and escapes, my star was still in the ascendant;—the sun of Austerlitz was shining brightly on me. What a blessing it is that the world has such a short memory for our faults as well as our virtues! Here and there, indeed, may be found a sour creditor who calls to mind the mode by which you obtained a particular ten pound note, or a rancorous upholsterer with whom, in the tumult of affairs, you neglected settling for a valuable suite

of drawing-room furniture. Such men have memories worthy of Macaulay; but as for the world at large—bless you! you have only to become a member of Parliament, or otherwise obtain a conspicuous position, and keep up decent appearances, and Lethe, the river of oblivion, rolls its watery labyrinth over all your peccadilloes.

This train of thought threw me into a reverie, from which I was roused by Mrs. Munkittrick informing me in her blandest tones that a set of Lancers was about to be formed, and that she had a charming companion to introduce me to. Being somewhat sceptical as to what this good lady might consider a charming companion, I went as a lamb to the slaughter;—how different from the headlong enthusiasm with which I had pressed my suit on the fair Mary Anne in those very rooms two years ago, and had been enigmatically reminded by her that “Captain Twycross was looking at us!” What!—Did my eyes deceive me? Was I in a dream? No—I actually found myself bowing to the beautiful and interesting girl, my chance meeting with whom in a railway carriage had impressed me so deeply! The reader already knows how anxiously I had longed for further tidings of her, how bitterly I had regretted having, in the charm of her conversation, made no attempt to ascertain her name or address, and how cruelly I had been disappointed in a certain abortive visit to Blessington Street. For some days and nights she had constantly occupied my thoughts, and though, in the incessant whirl of business, the impression was somewhat weakened,

it was far from being effaced. And now—there she was !

“ Miss Etchingham—Mr. Westropp.”

I shook hands warmly with her, and expressed the delight it gave me to meet her in premises that boded more permanent intimacy than a railway train.

“ I was almost afraid you were a myth,” said I, “ and that I should have to go to Fairyland to seek you.”

“ And so you have not forgotten me ? ”

“ Forgotten you—never ! And you—”

“ I have certainly not forgotten you,” she replied in that sweet modest tone, which, if the coquettes of the world only knew how much more we men are moved by it than by all their forward tricks, might be sometimes heard in society once more.

When the reader saw me dancing in that room before, he must have put me down—and justly—as a mere fortune hunter ; but how was it that this girl, who might be a pauper, made my heart beat as it had not beaten in the (vain) pursuit of forty thousand pounds ? Why was it that I felt as if I had known her all my lifetime ?

I made her laugh—a hearty, musical, unaffected laugh—as I told her of the “ practical joke ” that had been played upon me through the instrumentality of either Twycross or his friend, arising from our meeting last October.

“ I hope that will teach you not to be running after chance travelling companions.”

“ Except when they are as charming as in the present instance.”

She had a pleasant way—would it were more general—of being deaf to all compliments to herself, and immediately turning the conversation into other channels.

I soon elicited some information about her family, and learned that her mother had been dead for many years, and that her only sister was married and settled in Calcutta. Her life, therefore, was lonely enough. Her father, an eccentric warrior, who had been badly wounded at Waterloo, was an old friend of Mr. Munkittrick, but he had been living with her a good deal in England, and had only lately returned from it. This accounted for her complete ignorance of Captain Twycross on the memorable occasion of our first meeting. I ascertained that her father was in a chronic state of law with an elder brother, a retired East India colonel, in reference to his share of a large ancestral estate of which he had been unjustly deprived. If he gained that he would be very wealthy, but for years back he confidently maintained that all the lawyers were fools, all the juries mad, and all the judges in the pay of his brother. Lest the reader should expect further development in reference to this litigation, I may at once mention that, for all I could ever learn, the estate might have had its whole origin and existence in the brain of the gallant veteran.

My curiosity to make the acquaintance of Captain Etchingham was very strong, and I was soon enabled to gratify it. I found him holding forth to Old Mun and some other admiring friends in a corner of the spacious room. He was a tall, soldierly-built man, somewhat over

sixty, *primâ facie* evidence of whose services was given by the loss of his left arm, by the mark of a deep scar across his cheek, and by a wig that came down very near his eyes, concealing a silver plate which surgical skill had contrived to fix on his forehead, after he had received a dangerous wound. Under these circumstances he looked sufficiently grim and ferocious, but his genial hearty manner quickly removed all unpleasant impressions.

Had I not been prepared by his daughter to expect something very strange, I should certainly have been astounded at the reception he gave me when Munkittrick introduced me as his talented young friend Mr. Westropp, the member for Gulgreina, over whom Apollo, the god of eloquence, delighted to wave his golden wing.

"I am happy to see you, sir. Do you know my brother the colonel?"

"I have not that pleasure."

"Pleasure, do you call it? Begad, there's no accounting for tastes. Pleasure! Why, he's the most confounded rascal under the sun. I am glad you're in Parliament, and I must get you to bring my case before the House. It is my last chance for justice. I don't think he has exactly bribed all the Lords and Commons."

"I should hope not."

"Don't mind him, captain," said the judicious Munkittrick. "You were just talking of your campaigns when Mr. Westropp came up."

"Ay," cried the mercurial veteran, "I think I was at

Badajoz. You know the song, 'He left his leg in Badajoz's breaches.' And mighty dry work it is to talk about. Where are the materials, Mun?"

The "materials" were in another room, to which half a dozen of us repaired, in high glee at getting hold of something so widely removed from the dull and decorous conventionalities of life.

"They may talk of their wines," said Captain Etchingham, as he mixed himself a tumbler of punch, "but as for me, give me good old Irish whisky. Not but that wine was very welcome in our campaigns—when you could only get it. And as for meat, I never hear 'strangers in the land of Ham' read out in church, without thinking of old times. And that reminds me—where was I?"

"Fast coming to Waterloo."

"And a devil of a place the same Waterloo was. I often heard the French were a polite people, but faith it's little of their politeness I saw there. I never was in such a bear-garden in my life. When the Imperial Guard came galloping up at the close of the day, the ground shook like thunder."

"It must have been dreadful."

"Dreadful! Begad, you may say that. I have not been right in my head from that day to this."

The grimness of the captain's face, and the gravity of his manner, contrasted so strongly with the eccentricity of his language and style, that it was impossible to refrain from laughter. He continued:—

"I had lost my arm at Badajoz, and had my face cut open at Vittoria, but I fought furiously for all that. At last bang came a bullet, that carried away part of my pericranium, as the doctors called it. You may always trust the doctors for a long word! They said it was a miracle the brain was not touched."

"It was certainly wonderful," observed Munkittrick, whose customary flowers of rhetoric seemed wholly unable to bloom in the presence of this portentous phenomenon.

"All the fortune of war, sir. Having only one head, it was no joke, you may go bail. Down I fell, and 'Lord, forgive me my sins,' says I, taking to prayers as natural as a parson. If Corporal Tim Casey wasn't there to pick me up, it would be all over with me. 'Your honour's all in a gore of blood,' says Tim; 'where are ye hit?'—'Begorra I don't know,' says I, 'I believe I'm hit all over.' With that he picked me up, and carried me off."

"You must have a wonderful constitution, sir," I suggested, "to survive so many wounds."

"Faith, I believe you,—and there's work in me still. Do you know, there is nothing would have given me greater pleasure than to have had a dash at O'Connell's rebels a year or two ago."

As most if not all of the little group present were professed Repealers, this announcement had a very formidable sound; but considering the quarter from which it came, it can scarcely be wondered that it was received with hearty laughter. But the laughter was principally at my

expense now, as a trusted lieutenant of the great tribune, and many a sly allusion to "O'Connell's rebels" saluted my ears during the night, without in the least disturbing my equanimity.

It being evident that the influence of mountain dew was likely to operate more prejudicially on this gallant veteran than either fire or sword, Munkittrick, the most hospitable, but also the most considerate of men, prudently suggested that we should return to the ladies. Before doing so, however, he called on the captain for a song, and that gentleman, replenishing his tumbler in a fit of abstraction, burst into harmony without the slightest pressing. He gave us "The British Grenadiers" with a voice of stentorian strength, and enforced the lines—

"And all the gods triumphant,
Descending from their spheres,
Beheld with admiration
The British Grenadiers"—

with certain imposing and commanding gestures, designed to impress his audience with the Homeric sublimity of the passage, but which only led to renewed peals of merriment.

I took the earliest opportunity of rejoining Miss Etchingham, and conversing with her about her father. Those originals who yield so much amusement to society are often troublesome enough to live with, and I could see that the captain was a constant source of anxiety and apprehension to his daughter. She frankly admitted the pain it caused her to see him make an exhibition of himself in company.

"I understand and respect your feelings," said I, "but your father's case is an exceptional one. Does not his eccentricity proceed from the wound in the head he received at Waterloo?"

"So the doctors say."

"Then let us honour him for it. Any man who has bled to save Europe from a tyrant has dearly earned the right to relieve society from some of its dulness."

A gracious smile rewarded me; and I felt prouder of the success of that neatly turned little sentence than of the applause that greeted a bloodthirsty oration I had delivered in the Corn Exchange the day before, in which I had goaded a thousand coal-porters to the verge of madness.

I took little interest in the proceedings at Munkittrick Hall unless as far as they regarded Maud Etchingham, to whom I devoted myself assiduously during the night. Every time I conversed with her she developed some new charm of mind or manner, contrasting most agreeably with the vapid commonplaces or heartless coquetry of most of the girls around her;—and I sympathized strongly with her evident annoyance at the roars of laughter that followed a very peculiar speech at supper, in which her father returned thanks for "the Army and Navy"—a toast manifestly proposed for the sole purpose of drawing him out—though probably no one in the room was more amused by the speech than myself. By-the-bye, though a professional orator, I heartily rejoice that the absurd old custom of speech-making in society has died out as completely as

that of duelling, and other kindred barbarities. In this respect, at all events, "silence is golden."

At four or five o'clock in the morning I found myself accompanying the Etchingshams towards their lodgings at Warrington Place, on the Grand Canal, the gallant captain holding forth with much vehemence, and I—what was I doing? *Non mi ricordo*; but if any recording angel were to report that I was indulging in whispers, on subjects wholly unconnected with the Army and Navy—nay, that I sometimes even ventured on pressing a fair hand—I should not presume to give that angel the lie. But, foolish as the captain's talk may appear, my own was probably still more so. I therefore give him the preference.

"And so you don't know my brother, Mr. Weskit?"

"Westropp, if you please."

"Well, Westropp. Between ourselves, you have no great loss. I'd advise you not to borrow money to spend in his company. And the murder is, the judges are just as bad. I sued him in the Common Pleas, and was nonsuited on a point of law;—brought it on next term, and the jury disagreed;—tried it again after the long vacation, and got a verdict in my favour at eight o'clock at night;—and, what do you think, sir?—my brother bribed the four judges, and they upset a verdict of twelve jurors on their oaths—on their oaths, sir! Now do you see it?"—and he poked me violently in the ribs.

I certainly felt it.

"I tried the Vice-Chancellor and the Lord Chancellor

himself, and all the while I might as well be whistling jigs to a milestone. They were all in his pay. They went so far sometimes as to have me ordered out of court, and threatened to commit me if I kept looking for justice."

"It's a hard case, captain. Where does your brother live?"

"In Portman Square. Ask the first policeman you meet in London where Colonel Etchingham lives, that robbed his brother and bribed the judges, and you'll find it as easily as Newgate."

"I have no doubt I should find Newgate easily enough."

"We are at home now, Mr. Westropp," said the silvery voice of Maud Etchingham. Why were they at home? Why was the curtain to fall on this pleasant drama? The ranting of the "heavy father" was tiresome enough just then, though I might have been diverted by it at another time ;—but a performance of my own had been going on all this while, and it was painful to have the lights so suddenly extinguished. But I was to be permitted behind the scenes on a visit next day, and that permission made me supremely happy.

CHAPTER II.

LIFEBOATS LAUNCHED INTO THE DEEP.

WAS I in love? That was the first question I asked myself on awakening, and I had to answer it in the affirmative. Various profoundly judicious resolutions I had formed, of looking for a rich wife in the higher regions of London society, were shattered at a blow. Here was a girl to whom I had only just been introduced, and whose eccentric father had such a mania for destructive litigation, and yet I could no more think of relinquishing the hope of winning her hand than of stopping the torrent of Niagara. All the desperate straits to which I had been reduced, and all the ingenious expedients I had resorted to for my extrication, had not taught me prudence in the gravest step of life. I was an erring man, a sinful man, but, ye gods! was I not still a man? By what name was I to designate certain wiseacres of my acquaintance—grave, plodding, church-going folks—who were enabled to pay twenty shillings in the pound, at the cost of allying themselves to wrinkles and deformity? I felt irresistibly impelled to make once more an experiment in which I had already so miserably failed. Strange to say,

my destiny seemed to be always in the hands of woman. It had been my ambition to brave the storms, and bear the brunt, of political conflict—to struggle in those heart-stirring scenes of public life that leave their mark on history—in a word, to become a leader of men. But it had been decreed that I should be led by women. I would fain be a Samson in politics ;—but there was always a Delilah to get the better of me.

Apropos of my transactions with the fair sex, the reader has not forgotten Miss Oglethorpe, the dark-eyed, rosy-cheeked little damsel, whom some evil genius had induced to accompany two stronger-minded females on an important deputation to my house. I may briefly mention in passing that I had been much attracted by Miss Oglethorpe on that occasion, and, as one good turn deserves another, had repaid her visit by making her an early call. In the course of some *tête-à-têtes* with which I was favoured, I found her clever, brilliant, fascinating, and at least as much disposed for love-making as myself,—but somehow her very spirit of philanthropy alarmed me. Is it of such materials that good wives are made? “That’s as thereafter may be.” There was certainly no pleasanter toy for an idle hour ; but when we venture on the stormy ocean of matrimony, a toy is a poor substitute for a seaworthy vessel. We want something that is “heart of oak.” I saw that there were breakers ahead, and took the earliest opportunity of leaving my fair friend to steer her lifeboat without me. It was plentifully manned with admirers, you may be sure,

if not with actual suitors; but as a rising member of Parliament is not caught every day, my defection was probably a source of some annoyance to the "dear bewitcher."

Of very different stuff, I could not but feel assured, was my new friend, on whom I called at Warrington Place the day after the ball. New!—I felt as if I had known her for ages. She was playing the grand march in *Norma* as I entered, and I noticed a few standard works, French, German, and English, scattered on the table.

I expressed my pleasure at finding her alone, coupled with regret that my parliamentary duties would take me to London in a few days.

"I am very sorry for it, too," she said, "for we are very lonely here."

"There must be something strangely exciting," said I, "in a parliamentary career, and I have not the slightest idea how I shall fare in it. Have you read any of my speeches?"

"I have—several—and have often felt an anxiety to meet the speaker; but you have never converted me, for all that."

"O thou of little faith!"

"I can't but feel that you would show your patriotism much better by giving up this agitation altogether."

"I bow to your decision, Miss Etchingham. I never argue with a lady."

But she was much too straightforward to accept as

current coin the flippant jargon which we are wont to pass off on her sex, and I felt somewhat embarrassed as she quietly retorted,—

“Then you don’t think us worth arguing with?”

“By no means—certainly not; and that reminds me that I *have* argued stoutly with some ladies not long ago.” Here I gave her an account of the deputation from the society for promoting woman’s rights, at which she laughed a good deal. I did not think it necessary to say anything of my subsequent intimacy with Miss Oglethorpe.

“Now,” said she, “pay me as great a compliment as you did to those ladies, and argue the benefits of your agitation with me—for I must honestly say I have always thought it a great evil to Ireland.”

“That is because you were brought up in the camp of the enemy. So was I;—but we men soon see both sides of a question. If you were only to hear Daniel O’Connell—”

“I once had that pleasure for half an hour. He is a wonderful man.”

“But he did not convince you?”

“Certainly not. I admire and respect him. I believe he is in earnest. He is an old man, and a Roman Catholic, and was brought up in times of oppression;—but you—”

“I suppose you don’t think *me* in earnest?”

“I am far from saying that, for it would be accusing you of a great crime. Of course it is hard for a girl to venture on an opinion on politics—”

"Any from you shall be most welcome."

"Well, I must say I think it the duty of an Irish patriot to give up agitating, and stimulate our countrymen to the pursuits of industry. Look at the Scotch for instance."

"What of them?"

"I may be wrong; but had not they great quarrels with the English, and don't they consent to live peacefully with them under the one government?"

This was a "facer." The Scotch, it is true, had not had the fiery cross of agitation spread among them in those benighted days. They had often been thrown in my teeth before, and I had to exert all my plausibility in proving the wide difference of the cases between the two countries; but this was not the time for pouring forth arguments to confute my fair companion. The subject had better be shirked.

"There is certainly much truth," I replied, "in what you say, looking at it solely from one side;—but it is too long a subject for us to enter on now. At all events, I am deeply committed to a particular course, and you know Macbeth's words, 'returning were as tedious as go o'er.'"

"Well, perhaps you are right. It seems to be the path of fortune."

"Fortune?—ah no! I have enough to live on in comfort at present;—but it is all false appearances. A skilful mechanic has a more solid prospect for the future than a mere agitating member of Parliament."

“ You surprise me very much. Then, is there no reality in the lives of public men ? ”

“ Well, sometimes ; but—you drive me to say what I would rather not say, nor even think. I often believe that the very hollowness of our Irish politics is a blessing, by saving the country from something worse. O’Connell is now, as he says himself, ‘ the best abused man in Europe ; ’ but there are dark and stormy spirits abroad, and I fear the day may come when even his enemies would wish to have his strong hand to keep those spirits in order.”

“ It seems a pity he called them into existence,” replied my stout antagonist. “ And can it be that there is no hope for Ireland ? ”

“ God forbid I should say so ; but I fear we have much to wade through yet. The curse of seven centuries is not so easily removed.”

There are moments when, casting off the veil of selfishness and passion that obscures our vision, we seem to be gifted with something like prophetic insight. Why did a strange thrill run through me as I spoke those words ? Was it a presentiment of coming evil ? Why did that conversation sink deep into my mind, and recur to me with peculiar force during the horrors of the famine that, unseen, impalpable, unsuspected, was making its hideous progress towards us with giant strides ? I know not ; but I know that my companion elevated me for the moment to thoughts far removed above the follies, the heats, the noisy politics of the hour. I felt, too, that the very frankness of her

opposition, so little to be expected from a young beauty, strongly heightened the claims she already had upon my admiration and respect. I was about to say something very complimentary—and also, I daresay, very foolish and rhapsodical—when the genius of boredom, always so busy in human affairs, drove Captain Etchingham into the room.

“How are you, Mr. Westropp? I’m delighted to see you. Making yourself at home with my daughter, like an old campaigner—eh?”

He looked uncommonly sly as he made this sagacious remark, by which Maud appeared somewhat confused.

“Well, no matter, my boy. I was young myself once, and that reminds me—why, bless my soul, Maud, where’s the lunch?”

Certain decanters and biscuits were forthwith produced in obedience to martial law. I need not say I could have conversed with Maud for hours, without thinking of anything so vile as creature comforts. I took a glass of sherry, but remonstrated with the captain on his exuberant hospitality as he quickly poured me out another, confining himself, meanwhile, to spirits and water.

“I am afraid, sir, you would soon have me *hors de combat*.”

“Nonsense, man!—Is it on such boarding school girl’s tittle as that? Begad, if you had been cut up like me, right, left, and centre, and knocked your head against cannon balls and French sabres, it’s not a glass of sherry

you'd run away from. But *entre nous*, I am afraid we took a little more than was good for us last night."

("Speak for yourself," I inly muttered.)

"But no matter; they say, 'a hair of the dog that bit you'—devilish clever doctor he must have been that discovered the cure. And talking of that, fill your glass, Westropp, and here is a toast any honest man may drink to—Confusion to my brother and the judges! Can you keep a secret?"

"I hope so."

"Then I'll tell you this. Bonaparte was an odious scoundrel, but he was an angel compared to my brother. Did you ever hear Bonaparte accused of keeping his family out of their property, and bribing the judges?"

Alas! good-bye to both sense and sentiment for the rest of that visit.

I have been so busy relating matters of personal interest that I forgot to say Kate had been nearly as much taken with Maud Etchingham as myself, and had invited her and her father to her wedding. The invitation was accepted; and I need scarcely say the presence of the sweet girl, who had already made such a deep impression on my heart, added a charm to my sister's wedding, which otherwise even that indescribably happy event would not have afforded me. I felt some apprehension, it is true, at the eccentricities of the whimsical captain being subjected to my mother's criticism, and was at once rejoiced and surprised to find

that she positively admired him. Had he possessed the highest character, the deepest learning, the most polished manners, with some *souçon* of commerce clinging to him, I would not answer for the consequences ; but he was “an officer and a gentleman”—better still, a Waterloo man—(a higher class of men had got commissions in the days of the Peninsular war than since, she discovered)—and then Etchingham was a good name, as the poor silly woman proved by plunging into a genealogical labyrinth. Why, she seemed just as mad as himself, though with no silver plate on the head, nor (as I somewhat maliciously soliloquized) elsewhere.

I often noticed with relish the quiet chuckle which Lofthouse enjoyed, when my mother would fulminate pedigrees on him, and embrace half the County Clare families in a comprehensive parenthesis. It would be a dull world without the foolish people ; and these very absurdities of my mother afforded Lofthouse so much amusement, that I believe he would as soon have thought of settling down in his ancestral seat without his wife as without his mother-in-law. A total break up of the family, therefore, was at hand. In such circumstances it would be foolish for me, who must spend at least half the year out of Ireland, to remain tenant of a large house in Baggot Street ; and I had accordingly arranged with my landlord to vacate it immediately. It was not without many a keen pang I arrived at this resolution. That house had been my home from early boyhood. All my dearest feelings had been entwined around it. In it I

had lived, laboured, schemed, suffered, enjoyed. The greatest of Irishmen had visited me beneath its roof. It had seen me rise (thanks to him) from nothing, to the proud position of a member of the British House of Commons, with renovated hopes in the infinite possibilities of to-morrow. To leave it for ever was to tear away a part of my very being. How golden in memory seemed the sun that had so often poured its rays there upon my youthful aspirations ! Hard, callous, worthless, must be the heart of him who can leave the home of his youth without a pang.

These thoughts rushed powerfully upon me while dressing on the wedding morning, which, prolific though it was of happiness, must yet shatter so many old associations. They vanished during the bustle and animation of the day, the laughter, the compliments, the badinage, the toasts, the wine-bibbing ; but they were succeeded by still more painful reflections. I was emphatically the victim of a false position. Lofthouse had his ancestral castle in Tipperary to bring his wife to, and eight thousand a year to support their dignity. I had—nothing. Why were the goods of fortune so unequally distributed ? Why could I not offer a home to the girl I loved ? Why must I go forth to fulfil my destiny in another and a hostile land, and leave her behind, with the dangerous gift of beauty, unpledged, unplighted, unaware of my passion, and reserved perhaps for some happier suitor, who could afford to be outspoken ? Why must I, the orator, the public man, the “honourable member,” so spoiled by luxurious tastes and the applause of multitudes, continue

to lead the cheerless and Ishmaelitish life of a bachelor, while newspaper reporters who had lately been my colleagues were able to take to themselves wives whom they loved, and be happy in their humble homes ? Ah ! it was the old story, that so many men, whose names have been trumpeted abroad through the world, have to tell—false position, false appearances, the sacrifice of true and solid blessings on the shrine of splendid phantasms !

CHAPTER III.

DESCRIBES A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL PANTOMIME, AT WHICH
THE AUDIENCE IS FAST ASLEEP.

I WAS so incessantly occupied during my last few days in Dublin that I had little time or leisure for sentimental considerations. I had to answer about a hundred letters daily—to attend several balls and other entertainments—to receive a deputation from a committee of the Poulterers' Patriotic Sunburst Union—to deliver an address to the Associated Hibernian Grievance-Mongers—to preside at a meeting for the improvement of the breed of Irish asses—and, worst of all, to pay a hurried visit to my constituents in Gulgreina, whom I had only gratified with one oration since they had shown their discrimination by electing me. All this was hard work to be accomplished in ten days. It left me scarcely any opportunity of seeing Maud Etchingham; and doubtless I should have considered this occupation of my time as highly beneficial, reflection having convinced me that it was desirable for both our sakes to tear her image from my heart. But this was much more easily resolved than done. Do what I would, the few meetings we had had,

each succeeding one developing new graces of mind and manner in her, would rush upon my recollection. I longed, even while I dreaded, to pass another evening with her. The reader recollects how I had treated resolution at the Dargle. Well, that had certainly been a mistake—a mistake that must not be repeated. But resolution might be safely treated to a farewell night with Maud, in which both she and I should be effectually guarded from accident. There could surely be no great risk in meeting her in company with her father and another friend. I accordingly invited them and Malachi Fitzsimon to dinner for the evening before I was to start for London.

I may mention that Malachi was at once a liberal-minded Roman Catholic, a mild type of Repealer, and a thorough man of the world. There was nothing that he relished more than an original ; and when I apprised him in advance of the prejudices and peculiarities of the hero he was about to meet, he replied that he would be happy to have his corns trod on to any extent by my new friend.

I felt very strange during that last dinner I was to eat under the old roof that comprised all I had ever distinctly recollected of home. This was a very ghostly little dinner party ; mocking, unreal, the harbinger of wondrous changes. *Here* to-night, listening to that comical old captain, taking wise counsel with Malachi, sitting between my mother and the beautiful girl who had awakened such powerful feelings in me ;—*where*, to-morrow night ? In what new world was I to begin to exist, once I entered the magic portals of St.

Stephen's? Was life a dream? Perhaps so. It would be a very sweet one, I felt, if it could only be dreamed out in company with Maud. But no—while mixing among millions, I must be doomed to solitude. I could not, like the veriest ploughman among my constituents, afford to take to my heart the girl I loved, to breathe my passion in her ear, to ask her to be mine for ever.

Captain Etchingham was one of that numerous class of grown children who attach the utmost importance to levees, drawing-rooms, "beef-eaters," "gentlemen at large," swords of state, gold sticks in waiting, and court ceremonial of every sort. He had a carefully preserved old red coat with tarnished gold lace, in which he had "exhibited his deportment" at the castle during the past week, thereby firmly believing that he afforded incontestable evidence of his loyalty. He was extremely wroth with me for not having done likewise, and wanted to know why, at a time when there were so few members of Parliament in Dublin, I had neglected this opportunity of tendering my homage to the representative of majesty.

"Because I think there were quite fools enough there without me," I rashly replied.

"What, sir! Do you consider it folly to pay respect to the Lord Lieutenant?"

"Certainly not. I honour his high office; but I will bow the knee to no man—not even to O'Connell, the uncrowned king of Ireland."

This unfortunate remark made the captain boil over with fury in a moment.

“O’Connell—the big beggarman!—the traitor!—the rebel!—the greatest rascal under the sun (except my brother the colonel). There is nothing I’d relish more this minute than cutting him and his Tail to pieces.”

“You will cut nothing worse than mutton here, captain,” interposed the pacific Fitzsimon. “We must not frighten the ladies, you know.”

The captain laughed slightly, for his moods varied a good deal, and grim-visaged war smoothed his wrinkled front in his person, as he continued,—

“I beg Mrs. Westropp’s pardon. I was a little hot—but rebellion and such stuff sets me wild. The last time I called a man out was for saying he valued Washington more highly than George the Fourth. ‘Are you a rebel?’ says I. ‘No more than yourself,’ says he, ‘but I despise a bad man even though he is a king.’ ‘What the d——l is it to you,’ says I, ‘whether he is a bad man or a good one? Doesn’t the prayer-book call him His most Sacred Majesty?’ ‘That shows that the prayer-book wants to be altered,’ says he. Oh, you never knew a fellow so full of heresy and schism—ay, sir, you may well laugh, schism!—though he let on to be a sort of a Protestant (good morning to you! My private opinion is he was a free-thinker). ‘And so nothing will do you but to alter the prayer-book,’ says I; ‘d——n your heresy! Name your friend.’ Only think, the cowardly humbug begged to be excused! If he had not shown the white feather, I’d soon have taught him to give up his low rebellious tricks.”

“And you would have done perfectly right,” said my

mother. "Do take care, Jack dear, when you go to London, and mind what the captain says. It will never do for a Westropp to forget to keep up his consequence. There is no knowing the scrapes you may get into among strangers with your levelling sentiments. They are really very low—(not to say irreligious)."

Ay, ay ! It was a toss up which of them was the madder. Why should I make any attempt to answer them, or set them right ? Has not a high authority pronounced people to be "mostly fools" ? Why should anybody strive to be wise in so mad a world ?

Malachi enjoyed the captain's ebullitions immensely ; and I could notice that, while Maud Etchingham's cheek alternated between the pallor of anxiety and the blush of confusion, the attorney's keen eye was glistening with merriment.

"Talking of duels," said he, "I was never challenged but once. The cause was a very odd one. It was simply for telling a man he 'looked both ways.' I intended it as a compliment on the way he was hedging in an argument ;—but it appears he had a bad squint, and he took it into his head that I meant to be personal."

"I don't wonder," said the captain. "It was a very fair ground for him to ask you to blaze away on. Of course you went out ?"

"Certainly not. 'Eyes right' is a fair motto all the world over. What chance would I have against a man whose very eyesight was dual ?"

A ready joke, like a soft answer, turneth away wrath. Even my mother, whose perception of the ludicrous was of the smallest, laughed at this manifest invention ; and the Waterloo hero joining in the mirth, harmony was thoroughly re-established.

A professional engagement compelled Malachi to leave very early. I parted from him with no little emotion, for he had always been one of my best and truest friends, and I feared I might often miss his judicious counsel and assistance, not less than his social qualities, in the great wilderness of London. Shortly after tea my mother begged the Etchingshams to excuse her for a while, as she had a good deal to look after, this being her last night in Dublin, and, leaving us in the drawing-room, she plunged into the engrossing occupation of packing trunks and portmanteaux. Our little party was thus rapidly reduced from five to three :—destiny would have it so ! The old captain fought his battles o'er again, abused his brother and the judges to his heart's content, and, finally yielding to a drowsiness for which his preference of punch to tea (on strictly sanitary grounds) might account, he settled himself comfortably in his armchair in the chimney corner, spread his handkerchief over his head, and fell fast asleep.

And Maud—and the autobiographer—what were they about ?

Nothing very wise, you may be sure. I had taken all the precautions in my power, and they were all in vain. I had fenced myself round with witnesses, and they had gradually

melted away. I had plumed myself on having, for once in my life, acted with incontestable prudence, and I was to be punished—or rewarded, as you may choose to consider it—by being driven back to folly.

Why did I move my chair closer to Maud's?—why did I press her hand, and gaze into her eyes?—why did I (unconsciously) insert some fingers among “the tangles of Neæra's hair,” and let them disport and dally there, until they chose to wander from her ringlets to her lips? Why? Neither Locke nor Whately could tell the reason why. Given two fools of opposite sexes, with an old hero asleep in the corner, and their proceedings are sure to be illogical enough to baffle all the philosophers in the world.

“It is too bad that I have to leave you to-morrow, Miss Etchingham. Somehow that sounds cold and stiff. Miss Etchingham!—I am strongly tempted to call you Maud.”

“I shall be very happy.”

“Thanks—then Maud—dear Maud—what a sweet name! And I must tear myself away from you—and from mother—dear old mother—to go among strangers—far, far from those I love.” And the fingers that I pressed were lifted (still unconsciously) to my lips. This was not a bad beginning for a young member of Parliament, whom sober reason had convinced of the absolute necessity of fortune-hunting as a means of future subsistence. How much wiser I must have appeared in my first chapter!

“It must be painful, indeed. You will be away for six months?”

"Oh, no. You know there are ten or twelve holidays at Easter."

"Which you will spend in Paris—or Scotland—or—"

"Never, love—here—here!" And I pressed her to my heart.

She resisted, of course, being much the wiser of the two fools, but her resistance was by no means so violent as to arouse her sleeping father. Recollections of some similar scenes with Charlotte De Lacy did recur to me, even at that delirious and delicious moment. Pshaw! Comparisons are odious. Here was a heart of gold—had the Countess von Pultuthowski ever a heart at all?

Hitherto, the reader may have observed how accurately I have reported all conversations in which I took part. I said so or so—A.B. or C.D. answered in such and such terms—all went on in regular routine, and I drew upon my memory as methodically as a witness in a court of justice. But if all the lawyers in the world were to examine me as to that dialogue, I could not give the particulars;—and yet it was the most momentous one in my life.

It was like glimpses of ecstasy that I had been afforded in pantomimes;—not, of course, that part of the pantomime in which the clown tosses about babies, and fishes, and legs of mutton, in reckless profusion, and jumps through windows without breaking glass, and assaults the police without the slightest dread of consequences; no—but those halcyon scenes where heaven opens to our wondering gaze, and radiant angels slowly arise amidst scenes of bewildering glory, and

gigantic tortoise shells disclose sleeping nymphs of beauty so surpassing that, if the curtain did not fall rapidly upon them, I verily believe we should all rush upon the stage as one man.

Such is love's young dream. Perhaps you have never dreamed it, O reader. Perhaps you are one of those

"Douce folk wha live by rule,
Grave, tideless blooded, calm and cool,"

who look upon life as a great sum in arithmetic, and care for nothing but their progress in addition and multiplication. Alas! I have known many poor creatures of this sort—men whom the world esteemed wise in their generation, because they know nothing of the one joy beneath the skies, the first embrace of love.

Yes, I submit there must be some wisdom, after all, in the folly that can lift us in a moment on seraph's wings, and give us a foretaste of heaven;—but in the wildest trance of human rapture we cannot quite lose sight of the necessity of providing for these perishable prisons of the flesh.

"You are such a foolish fellow, Jack. Here you are engaging yourself to a portionless girl, with all London open to you!"

Ah, yes—I knew it well. Weary, remorseless, heartless London, what temptations must lurk in thy halls of dazzling light! I could not quite ignore them, even while that pure heart was beating against mine, and those glorious eyes were so eloquent of love. London, too, might have

its pantomimes, with bowers of bliss extending in endless vista ;—and to-morrow must rise upon a great transformation scene in my life.

What could I say? Ours must necessarily be a long engagement. I had no settled means of living whatever. We must both trust to the chapter of accidents, and cast our bread upon the waters. I gave Maud my picture, and obtained a lock of her hair, and promised to write at once on arriving in London, saying I should await her reply with feverish anxiety in that cold, unloving, mighty city.

“And, Jack, this must be no secret from papa and your mother.”

“Secret, love! Certainly not. I never was so proud of having anything to tell.—What noise is that?”

Only some indistinct rumblings from that exhausted volcano in the chimney corner, preparatory to a fresh eruption. The slumber of Vesuvius might have lasted for five minutes or for hours, for all I knew. I had other business on hand than looking at my watch! Why did not he sleep on until my mother’s return? I could not but ask. Ours was a pantomime that required no audience.

“You’ll excuse me, Westropp. It was very rude of me to fall off this way.”

“Don’t mention it, my dear sir. The sleep will do you a world of good.”

“Thanks. The doctors say tea is better for me than a little whisky punch ;—but if I had taken tea, I could not have closed an eye.”

"And that would be a great pity," said I, looking at Maud for confirmation, and receiving a smile of assent.

"Do you really think so? Ah, if you only knew me thirty or forty years ago! I have marched sixty miles a day in the Peninsula under a burning sun, and kept awake all night afterwards, watching those French devils. But I'm afraid you are annoyed with me, though you're too polite to say it."

"So far from that, captain, if you are only disposed for another doze—"

"Another! Why, what do you take me for? Another! I could keep awake now till this time to-morrow night, if Bonaparte himself were marching on Dublin."

Next day I started for London, and my mother for Lofthouse Castle, in Tipperary. An important episode of my life was played out, and passed into the land of shadows. I was torn from my ancient moorings; and the words "To be let" figured on that memory-haunted house in Baggot Street which, I trust, will yet awaken the interest of those curious in tracing the past abodes of remarkable patriots.

CHAPTER IV.

MY MAIDEN SPEECH IN PARLIAMENT.

WHATEVER pangs I may have felt in leaving home at such a period—and they were sufficiently keen—I had soon to admit that London had many inspiring influences, if not exactly counterbalancing attractions. I had never visited the great city since my call to the bar; and now I went there not merely as a spectator but an actor, with sundry valuable introductions to great houses, and with the *prestige* attaching, however unworthily, to a name that had been tossed about by the battledore and shuttlecock of fame. Mr. O'Connell's selection of me to represent Gulgreina must have puzzled many readers; but it is easily enough accounted for. Baronets, Honourables, Colonels, Queen's Counsel, men of ancient lineage and large estate, abounded among the Irish members of 1845. Now, though Repeal served as a useful war-cry to such men in many constituencies, their sincerity on that important question must be somewhat open to doubt. It was highly desirable, therefore, for the Liberator to procure an occasional penniless orator, of his own way of thinking on the great question of the day. I had proved myself such on

many a stormy platform, and, with all my faults, was perhaps as good a selection as my leader could have made when the vacancy at Gulgreina occurred.

I have already stated that, with the view of attaining parliamentary distinction, it was absolutely necessary for me to unlearn the florid style of oratory that had already made me only too conspicuous, and to adopt a phraseology sufficiently cold and classic to suit the fastidious taste of "the first assembly of gentlemen in the world." Had Jacob Faithful's friend deaf old Stapleton, the Charon of the Thames, been pursuing his avocations in my time, he might have watched me gesticulating, and heard me—for Stapleton was one of those deaf people who could hear when they liked—addressing Mr. Speaker, or inveighing against the policy of the right honourable gentleman, on our journey in his boat down the river. Practice makes perfect, and I was soon satisfied with the change I had effected in the manner of my speaking ; but the matter—ah, there was the rub ! What was I to speak about ? Those Englishmen were, for the most part, dull, prosy debaters, who would be voted bores in Exeter Hall or among the Cogers, to say nothing of the Dublin Corn Exchange, or the Corporation ; but somehow they had a wonderful knack of knowing what they were talking about. They had an enormous amount of information, derived from blue books and other equally uninviting sources, while I found that I knew—literally nothing. Even on the most elementary questions connected with my own profession, which were sometimes coming to the front, I was in a state

of Egyptian darkness. What, for instance, was the difference between a feoffor and a feoffee? A lawyer might cry "fie! fie!" at my ignorance. What was the doctrine of *cy-près*? A man might be a capital guesser of riddles, and yet have to give that up. What was the meaning of *taille*, and *tailage*? I could no tale unfold to solve such conundrums. What was the Scotch law of *hypothec*? For all I knew it might be anything or anybody, from an hypothesis to an apothecary. No;—guesswork would never do in law matters, however it might help a man in theology or medicine. My embarrassment at the consciousness of my own ignorance, in an assembly containing so many well-informed men, was enhanced tenfold by the recollection that I went among them accredited with a reputation. My premature fame haunted me like the creation of a Frankenstein. Not only was I expected to speak with authority on grave questions, the very A B C of which I had in truth got to learn, but I was bound to look at every subject from the standpoint of a separatist and "irreconcilable," and to keep continually obtruding Irish grievances on the notice of a hostile assembly.

I turn aside for a moment from these anxieties, to say that I was greatly cheered in my perplexities by the letters I received from home. After a brief wedding tour in Paris, Kate had assumed the control of Lofthouse Castle, where she became speedily immersed in the duties of hospitality and the details of upholstery. It is unnecessary to advert at present either to her or my mother, further than to say that they both wrote in the highest spirits. But Maud—

ah, how I treasured her letters ! How different were they from the sugar-stick effusions which we are accustomed to associate with the idea of love letters ! She referred sweetly and tenderly to the happy hour in which we had plighted our mutual troth, but asked me, while our engagement was still so young, to reconsider my resolution, and reflect whether I had suddenly yielded to a foolish impulse, the consequences of which I might regret in after years. If such were the case, let me not scruple to say so at once. She loved me too well to wish to be a barrier in the way of my advancement, and she could not but see that a more judicious match might be absolutely necessary for a man of my unsettled prospects. Later on, when her plans of life would be formed, and various old friends and schoolfellows would have congratulated her on her engagement, such a change would be cruel ; but now, she would only feel that we had both been foolish for a while, and would endeavour to forget the fairy visions conjured up in an hour which she must always consider the happiest of her life. How truly noble was all this ! Had she been a designing schemer, bent on giving strength and solidity to a fleeting attachment, she could not have gone a better way about it. I felt that, however foolish we might both have been, I should be far happier in a cottage with her than in a palace with any other woman. I accordingly wrote to her in a strain of passionate admiration, doing full justice to the purity and disinterestedness of her suggestions, but adding that the slightest hint of any breach of our contract in future would cause me the

deepest pain, and that I was sure therefore she would never recur to it again.

The day I wrote this letter I received by post a copy of *The Tornado of Erin*, a Dublin weekly journal which was fast creeping into notoriety by its advocacy of those rebellious doctrines which are always so dear to "the residuum" in Ireland. It contained, under the heading of "The Political Situation," an article (marked) devoted to the most furious and envenomed attacks on myself, both as a man and a politician.

We are told that Pope, after reading some lampoon against him, would say—"These things are my amusement;" but Johnson adds that, judging from the expression of his countenance at such times, his friends were not disposed to envy him his diversion. Even so, O *juvenis* or *ignotus*, who pinest so anxiously for the bubble we call fame, thou little knowest what a bitter entertainment is daily served up in the newspapers for us gentlemen who have had our share—or more than our share—of it. Of course we are expected to treat such attacks with silent contempt; but it is not so easy to receive them with equanimity when, as in my case, they might injuriously affect precarious sources of income, depending on the esteem and favour of the public; and I must confess I did *not* relish the article in question, the rather that I had secretly to admit there was a certain ridiculous element of truth in some parts of it. Most of us little suspect how ugly we are till we are photographed.

This attack made it more important for me than ever to break my parliamentary silence, and while I was sorely at a loss for the subject of a speech, my constituents were good enough unintentionally to furnish me with the materials for one. About the end of February a faction fight of the good old sort, long since extinct, took place at Gulgreina, and as the warriors on both sides were stimulated by potent potations, the battle soon attained the most alarming and extensive dimensions. A small body of the constabulary having interfered to preserve order, the rioters speedily directed all their fury against the guardians of the peace. The mob soon grew very large, and heavy stones were thrown at the constables, one of whom was badly cut in the face. He recognized the man who threw the stone, and retaliated with a violent blow of his baton, designed as he stated to disable his assailant's arm in self-defence, but, being blinded by the blood streaming down his face, the blow miscarried, and struck the unfortunate rioter on the head, causing his death after a few hours. Now, had this tragedy been caused by one of the mob, we should have heard very little about it, but resulting as it did from a blow struck by a constable, it became a crime of the deepest dye. A coroner's jury, before whom it was sworn that the policeman had mistaken the person of his assailant, and killed an innocent man, returned a verdict of "wilful murder" against him. On the other hand, a magistrate before whom he was brought commented in the severest terms on the conduct of the rioters, deplored what he called "the sad accident," and while

sending the constable for trial, at once admitted him to bail. This leniency, and the language of the magistrate, excited such a storm of public indignation that the Inspector-General, apprehending an organized attack on the police barrack at Gulgreina, found it necessary to send a strong additional force there.

The Nationalist papers at once took up the matter with the utmost warmth, and furious articles headed "The Gulgreina Murder" appeared in them day after day. At a special meeting of the Associated Hibernian Grievance-Mongers, held in Dublin, fiery attacks on police ruffianism were blended with wrathful denunciations of the apathy of the Irish representatives. I was particularly singled out for neglecting to bring the case before the House, and it was broadly stated that my novel virtue of silence was owing to the all pervading influence of ministerial gold. This was just the opportunity I wanted. I was now provided with a subject on which I was perfectly at home, and in discussing which my eloquence need not be fettered by the pedantry of detail. Some of my elder and more experienced parliamentary brethren, however, with whom I had a consultation, pointed out that, in spite of all this uproar, our merits in the Gulgreina affair were so slight, and our friends there had come into court with such unclean hands, that any direct attack founded on that tragic incident must do more harm than good. The question was, how were we to appease the wolves of Irish discontent by making a vigorous display in the House, in the course of which "the Gulgreina

murder " could be indirectly turned to account? It was decided that there was nothing for it but to raise once more the convenient demand for Repeal, a subject on which, of course, we knew we should be beaten heavily, but which would enable us to abuse the Irish executive to our hearts' content. It was arranged that John O'Connell, in the unavoidable absence of his father, should open the debate, and I was to speak later on.

I felt extremely anxious on the day of the debate. My friends told me that they learned from the gossip of the smoking room that I was expected to afford the house much amusement, by aiming at the flights of a Burke, and sinking to the level of a Boyle Roche. "In fact," as Dillon Browne put it to me, "these English fellows expect you to scatter copious flowers of oratory, all of which are to turn out heads of cabbage." Judging by my previous achievements, indeed, such an expectation was natural enough; but I smiled as I reflected that, whether I succeeded or failed, my censors should find themselves wonderfully disappointed.

There is always a spirit of Donnybrookism in human nature, and those dignified and decorous English members keenly relished an Irish "shindy" when they could get it, which was not often in those days. The House accordingly was crowded, and the debate proceeded with great animation, some distinguished members on both sides taking part in it. At last Sir James Graham, the Home Secretary, having sat down, there were loud cries of "Westropp!

Westropp!" and though my knees shook under me, and a qualm resembling that of sea-sickness made me tremble for my fate, I responded. For the first five minutes I felt strangely confused at the sound of my own voice in that august assembly, so unlike any I had hitherto addressed. I must have been considered a complete failure, and as I caught myself stammering, hesitating, and repeating the same sentences, I feared I should have broken down altogether. Encouraged, however, by some hearty "hear, hears," by no means confined to the Opposition—for I generally found that over-grown English public school, the House of Commons, generous and manly, if not always irreproachable in manners,—I soon lost this painful feeling of diffidence, and plunged into the full tide of speech.

Sir James Graham having commented severely on the violent speeches sometimes delivered in Ireland, and the dangerous articles appearing in Nationalist newspapers, I replied that in Ireland, as elsewhere, there might be some hot-headed youths, some fanatical dreamers, who fancied they could cope in arms with the most powerful nation in the world;—and there might be reckless journalists, who aimed at profit and notoriety by abetting them in their infatuation. But the heart of the Irish people is with you still; and it rests with yourselves to retain or to estrange it. How have you acted? When Ireland asked for bread, have you not given her a stone? When she asked for public works to develop her resources, to drain her rivers, to utilize her fisheries for the benefit of her toiling millions,

have you not replied by giving her—the most efficient constabulary force in the world? (laughter. Here I drew a strong picture of the proof that force had recently afforded of their prowess at Gulgreina, and continued) : The people of Ireland, in lawful and peaceable meetings, have again and again implored of you to consider their condition—to redress their grievances—

Sir James Graham. By dismembering the empire.

Mr. Westropp. Terrible phrase!—enough to strike any old lady with consternation (laughter and cheers). But is the thing it represents so formidable? If the weaker partner is satisfied with separation, why should the stronger be so gravely alarmed about it? If you consider Ireland the right eye that offends you, why should you not pluck it out and cast it from you? The people of Ireland, as I was observing when the right honourable baronet did me the honour of interrupting me, have again and again met in peaceful and constitutional assemblies, to represent what they considered their grievances. How have you answered them? You placed their venerated tribune on his trial before a packed jury (loud cries of “Oh, oh!”). Honourable members express their dissent, but I would remind them that in another place a noble lord has said—and the words have sunk deep into the heart of the Irish nation—“if such practices are allowed to continue, trial by jury in Ireland will become a mockery, a delusion, and a snare” (tremendous cheers from the Opposition). Such was the miserable result of your attempt to brand the Liberator of Ireland

with the opprobrium of revolutionary designs. But I was forgetting ;—there *was* a breach of the peace, and a somewhat serious one, connected with that great case. The Attorney-General of Ireland absolutely challenged one of Her Majesty's counsel to a duel in open court (loud and continued laughter). Sir, for my part I shall be happy if those peals of merriment enable us to close this debate in better humour than we commenced it in ; but the subjects at stake are too momentous to be trifled with. We are dealing now with the very life of a long-suffering nation. If you wish to goad Ireland to madness and rebellion, it is in your power to do so. You have your army, your constabulary, your myrmidons to baton wretched unarmed peasants to death, your magistrates to deal lightly with such atrocities. On your own heads be the responsibility for your deeds. Ireland only wishes to be at peace with you, and to share the blessings of the constitution under just and equal laws, but laws framed in her own Parliament—that Parliament which was hers within the memory of men still living. The day will come—God grant it may not be too late !—when you will discover your mistake in refusing her request, and will regret that you met Ireland's clamours for justice by adding a new insult to your ancient injuries.

I sat down amidst general applause, having spoken for an hour. Great was my gratification when Sir Robert Peel, in a brief reply, said that he cordially congratulated the honourable gentleman on his maiden speech, although it dealt a little severely with himself (laughter). Much of that

speech had been devoted to passionate misrepresentation, and its chief power had consisted in the highly ingenious way it had confused plain issues, but he always gladly welcomed an accession to their debating power, from whatever quarter of the House it might proceed; and he would consider it a subject of regret that eloquence such as they had just been listening to should be relegated to the comparatively obscure and provincial assembly in College Green, for which the honourable gentleman seemed so anxious to reserve it (cheers and laughter).

Et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

Of course the result was a foregone conclusion, and we were beaten by an enormous majority; but meanwhile the debate had done wonders for me. At a single bound I had become a speaker of some note; and I received very cordial congratulations from many eminent Whigs and Radicals on the power I had displayed. I had the honour that night not only of bringing Sir Robert Peel on his legs, but of leaving the House arm in arm with Richard Cobden.

"You really surprised me, Westropp," said he. "I thought I could take a young speaker's measure pretty well, but I candidly confess I did not think this was in you."

"I assure you I did not think it was in myself," I replied. "For the first few minutes I was in such a state that I would have felt much obliged to any one for knocking me down—it would have given me such an excuse for making me hold my tongue."

"I should not like to have been the man to perform that operation," said he, smiling. "So far from making you hold your tongue, I suspect we should never hear the end of it."

"Well, perhaps you are right there. It would be rather a lively breach of the privileges of the House."

"There is a great field," said Cobden, "open to an able and honest Irish member ;—but meanwhile I wish you had a better political programme than the perpetual wail of discontent over real or fancied injuries. A nation to be great must have great objects. O'Connell certainly worked splendidly for Ireland up to '29 ; but since then—"

"And what since then, Mr. Cobden?"

"Well, we should differ so completely that I won't enter on the subject at this late hour. It is pleasanter for me to congratulate you on the ability and pluck you have shown. Opposition and interruption really only seemed to give you new strength."

"I am delighted to hear that from you, above all men in the House. Yes, I like Marmion's device—'Who checks at me, to death is dight.'"

"Oratory," continued Cobden, "is a great power to wield, when directed to noble purposes ;—but it is also one of the most dangerous of weapons. Any of us whom God has blest with rare powers have special reason to pray that they may never become a snare to us.—Good-night."

Did these parting words of the great free-trader sound in my conscience-stricken ears like an indirect rebuke? Not

in the least. I now felt my strength, and all my former misgivings vanished. I had flung away my gaudy metaphors, I had measured myself with giants, I had justified O'Connell's selection of me. Henceforth the *Tornado of Erin* might sweep over my path at the rate of a hundred miles an hour, and it would find me unmoved. I was a charlatan, you will say. Yes ; but I was a charlatan who must be reckoned with ; who must one day succeed,—or be silenced.

CHAPTER V.

ASSAULTS UPON GIBRALTAR.

THE hit I had made in the debate had a material effect on my social position. Hitherto I had moved principally among a small but choice set of my fellow members—men after my own heart—witty, jovial, rollicking fellows, whose means were just as scanty and as precarious as my own. In such company it cannot be a matter of wonder that my love for good living and my habitual recklessness about the future rapidly plunged me into debt, in spite of all the warnings I had received in Dublin. To this subject I shall soon have occasion to advert fully. I merely glance at it in passing, to show that all was not gold in the somewhat glittering position I was about to occupy.

It was quite a matter of course that after I had “gained the ear of the House,” I should find myself courted by the Whig aristocracy of London, whose blandishments have so often proved fatal to the independence of Irish patriots. It is perhaps expecting too much from human nature to insist that men should remain altogether proof to these seductive influences. Try them, O rigid censor, and when thou hast

triumphed over them exult in thy virtue—but not till then. If my distinguished fellow-countryman Sheil, on being entertained at Norfolk House when a much older man than I, confessed himself deeply impressed by the “series of magnificent apartments, rich with crimson and fretted with gold,” “the vast and seemingly endless mansion, where massive lamps, suspended from the embossed and gilded ceilings, diffused a shadowed illumination,” would it not be the merest affectation to deny the effect of such splendours on a young man of antecedents like mine?

While the refinement, the culture, the high breeding, the easy elegance of good society in London, had charms to which I was peculiarly alive, most charming of all were the grace and beauty of fair patrician maidens, smiling approvingly on a young Irish orator of mark and likelihood, on whose brow were not stamped the fatal words—“I am an engaged man.” In my prolonged absence from Maud, my constancy was sometimes put to a pretty severe test. However, as she and I had rushed headlong into the trammels of a lifelong engagement, I had only to make the best of it, and, like so many of my proverbially improvident countrymen, expect the heavens to rain manna on our nuptials. Fortunately I received the most loving letters from her twice or three times a week, and every letter seemed, like some potent messenger from heaven, to scatter and put to rout all the dark clouds that lowered on our path. And then the Easter holidays would come round so soon!

I could not afford, like “single speech Hamilton,” to rest

on the laurels of a solitary oration. I saw with pride mingled with apprehension that much was expected from me, and I had to speak sometimes in Parliament. I suppose I had just enough of the literary temperament to make me critical on myself, and accordingly I spoke with extreme caution. This probably gained me a reputation for modesty, if not for indolence, whereas it was solely caused by the dread of an ignominious break-down. We hear much of the value of the *ars celare artem*. In my opinion the great need for an orator—ay, and for a writer too—is the art to conceal his own ignorance.

On the whole, perhaps, I had less reason to be dissatisfied with my first parliamentary season than the consciousness of my own deficiencies, and of my painfully false position, led me to imagine. The following sketch may show something of the snares and pitfalls laid for wandering Irish patriots in my time.

I was dining one evening with the Marquis of L——e, in company with men of exalted rank and more exalted talent, whose very names have long since passed into household words in every circle where English history is known and English literature treasured. It was probably in compliment to me that my distinguished host dwelt much on Irish affairs during the evening, and gave some interesting recollections of Grattan, Curran, and Plunket. The conversation by a natural transition glided to Daniel O'Connell.

“A greater man than any of them, Marquis,” said I, “say what you will.”

"I don't know that"—and he shook his head gravely. Our rough Irish Hercules, I may observe, was never much relished in the great world of London.

"He is a man of extraordinary powers," said M——y, "but utterly destitute of scruple. His scurrility is intolerable. He never rises to a generalization. He has consummated one achievement, of which Sydney Smith and some men now present were the pioneers; and he makes use of that solitary triumph to extort wealth from ignorant multitudes, by chasing moonbeams and bullying an empire."

The oracle had spoken, and all eyes were turned on me. I could with difficulty restrain my indignation, and though it would be vain to attempt to grapple with such an antagonist, I at once said,—

"I don't know that scurrility and bullying are peculiar to O'Connell among public men. *I* know what he is as a friend. He is certainly formidable to his foes—to their faces, and like a man."

"Bravo!" cried Lord B——m; "you have met your match, M——y. For God's sake don't be too hard on bullies and scurrilous folks, or where would some of us be? Why, I don't even profess perfection myself!"—and the famous Slawkenbergian nose twitched with an expression of fearful playfulness.

Lord P——n here adroitly turned the conversation from the somewhat personal aspect it was assuming.

"O'Connell is a wonderful leader of men," he remarked, "and justly boasts of having made a greater use of 'moral

force' than any other man in history. Of course he always knew that behind that moral force was the physical strength of millions ;—but he tried the game of intimidating England once too often."

"As there are no Tories present," said B——m, "I may remind you that he has done one good thing which may counterbalance many faults. He has kept the Whigs in power for years with that wonderful tail of his."

"True ;—and I hope none of us are ungrateful for benefits,—whatever the motive that dictated them," slyly observed Lord J—— R——l. "When Mr. Westropp called O'Connell a greater man than Grattan or Plunket, I was tempted to ask him for a definition of greatness ;—but we have it now. True greatness consists in keeping the Whigs in office. For my part I heartily subscribe to that definition."

"*Solventur risu tabule*," said the Marquis, laughing ; and the conversation rapidly changed.

I need scarcely say it was not for nothing that I was admitted to that brilliant circle. Those distinguished men, however widely differing at times on public questions, were in the main agreed on that great fundamental principle—

"The right divine of *Whigs* to govern *long*."

A smart young debater, if he could not exactly help to bring about such a Millennium, was at all events worth buying off. I knew perfectly well, therefore, that these aristocratic hospitalities were designed as amicable assaults on the Gibraltar of my patriotism.

Shortly before I left, these great personages and two or three others gathered around me at the fireplace.

“I am happy to have had the opportunity of meeting you socially, Westropp,” said Lord P——n, “and to find that you are fast becoming *naturalized*. Dublin is a charming place; but after all it must be rather tiresome for a permanent residence.”

“Perhaps so—since the Union has banished all our nobility. But I assure you I am very fond of London society, my lord.”

“I am delighted to hear it. A man like you must be lost in a small city;—and when the Repeal farce is played out, I hope you will settle with us altogether.”

Such assaults were not to be encountered by serious weapons. I threw myself accordingly into an imposing attitude, thrust my hand into the breast of my waistcoat, and exclaimed, with my best imitation of O’Connell’s delicious brogue, such an imitation as had erewhile coaxed fifteen pounds out of the pocket of Mr. Philip Fogarty,—

“My lords, unaccustomed as I am to public speaking, I can be silent no longer. I hurl my high and haughty defiance at the heads of our Saxon oppressors. The wrongs of centuries must be avenged; but they shall be avenged without the shedding of one drop of innocent blood. When the Parliament that was wrested from us by the perfidy of Pitt is restored, we shall once more see Ireland a nation—

‘Great, glorious, and free,
First flow’r of the earth, and first gem of the sea.’ ”

“Excellent,” “capital,” “bravo !” resounded on every side, and amidst peals of laughter I was pressed to continue my speech “in character,” which I did for some ten minutes, repeating O’Connell’s commonplaces, dealing out playful hits right and left, and showing that I was perfectly aware of the nature of those insidious attacks on my virtue. It was probably a long time since these famous statesmen had derived so much genuine amusement from the speech of any member of Parliament.

“There is not a wink on our young friend,” I overheard B——m’s strong voice saying to my noble host.

“True ;—but I don’t give him up yet, for all that,” replied the Marquis.

CHAPTER VI.

DAZZLING VISIONS.

THE reader will not be surprised to hear that shortly after this dinner my friend Wethercock, a very useful Irish member, who had often before been deputed to storm the fortresses of patriotism, began sounding me as to my views. O'Connell was getting old and shaky; the "rent" and "tribute" must in the nature of things be nearly exhausted, and must expire altogether with the Liberator; and if I quietly disengaged myself from the trammels of an impracticable party, good things might possibly be in store for me. Finding me disposed to listen—for I was always of an inquiring mind—it transpired that he was commissioned by an eminent Whig statesman, who must soon be in office again, to offer me the solicitor-generalship of Ireland, shortly after the lapse of the four years that were necessary for my admission to the inner bar.

This struck me as such a capital joke that I irreverently indulged in peals of merriment.

"Upon my word, Westropp," said Wethercock gravely,

"I consider this no laughing matter. It seems to me a splendid prospect for so young a barrister."

"Yes," said I, "and for a briefless barrister too, you might have added. You don't seem to see that that is where the real point of the joke lies."

"The joke?—but this is no joke."

"Well, I may be wrong, but really I always thought it advisable for a solicitor-general to know a little of law."

"Well, yes; in the abstract—in theory—it is certainly advisable; but in point of fact the great thing is to be *able to get the place*, and then you will be sure to fill it suitably. Everybody does. Formerly, you know, the great qualifications for the Irish bench were joking and duelling. We have done away with the duelling altogether, and as for the joking—"

"The devil's in it if I can't do that as well as another. But see here, Wethercock—supposing there was nothing else in the way, the Irish mob would tear me to pieces if I deserted their cause. I have solemnly sworn before a hundred excited audiences never to take office under any British government."

"Pshaw!"—and he regarded me with a glance half compassionate, half contemptuous. "You certainly speak like a very young gentleman, Westropp. The Irish mobs will have something else to think of than you and your inconsistency." (Alas! and so they soon had.)

"But downright perjury—"

"Nonsense, man! such cant sickens me. We are not

talking of private life now. Don't you know as well as any man that in politics all promises are made—and kept—in a parliamentary, or Pickwickian, sense?"

Yes, there was something in that. I told Wethercock that I should maturely consider the proposal. He departed satisfied, and I fell into a brown study. I was somebody at last. The great fishers of men who sway empires had thought it worth their while to spread their nets for me—for me, but yesterday an adventurer, a newspaper reporter, an inmate of the Marshalsea, a plaything of fortune in her wildest caprices. Solicitor-general for Ireland, with the certainty of the bench in the future—here was a prospect for a briefless barrister! Wethercock was right. Some knowledge of law in the head of the profession might be advisable, in theory,—but was it necessary in practice? Had it not been remarked even of Brougham, that "if he had only known a little of law, he would have known a little of everything"?—and yet that versatile walking encyclopædia was an ex-Lord Chancellor of England! My candidate patrons, it is true, were still in opposition, but their success ere long was assured, and I must take the hint to moderate my patriotic ardour, and mellow by nice gradations from a Repealer into a Whig. There was full time for all that. As for my confiding countrymen, there was nothing easier than to convince them that I should be far better able to advance their interests in office than in opposition. Nay, I should not even have to change sides, as I would still be opposed to those inveterate enemies of

Ireland, the Tories. So rapidly does the human mind accommodate itself to altered conditions, that I began building magnificent castles in the air on the strength of a proposal which five minutes before I should have considered the wildest absurdity.

The Easter holidays had now arrived, and I started for Dublin the day after my interview with Wethercock, light in pocket indeed, but, thanks mainly to that interview, light in heart also. Dublin seemed miserably dull after the whirl and roar of the vast city in which I had had such keen excitements, social and political. It was no longer the Dublin of my youth; my mother and sister were in Tipperary; my old house in Baggot Street knew me not; and I felt the true Londoner's pity for the Twycrosses and other friends condemned to abide in such a paltry capital.

It is astonishing how quickly and how insensibly these imperialized feelings grow upon one;—but there was a “green spot that bloomed in the desert of life.” I had arranged by letter the time for calling upon Maud, and she had judiciously fixed on an hour when the ancient warrior was always out. Words cannot describe the transports of our meeting. There she was, the centre of so many memories—the heroine of the charming railway dialogue—the myth vainly explored at Blessington Street—the Columbine of the glorious pantomime at which the audience had been fast asleep—the correspondent whose inspiring, ennobling, wisely counselling letters had cheered me so much in my absence. Ah! after all, what had London to offer like this?

“And now,” said I, when we were enabled to talk a little rationally, “I have reserved a grand bit of news for our meeting.” And I told her of the wonderful prospects that had been held out to me by Wethercock.

She listened with an attentive smile, but seemed by no means elated.

“Your career has been so strange already,” said she, “that perhaps there may be something even in this ;—but I fear it is too good news to be true.”

“Very likely ;—I thought so myself at first. But I must run my chance as well as another.”

“It will be a blessing at all events,” said she, “if it keeps you from agitation. There is nothing I dread so much.”

This was plain speaking to one who owed everything in the past to agitation. Love combining with ambition to undermine patriotism !

“You are an incorrigible Tory,” said I, “and your mouth deserves to be stopped ;”—and accordingly I stopped it effectually for a while.

In such lucid intervals as the raptures of our meeting afforded, we spoke of her father and of other friends, and of our future prospects, but I did not say a word of my fast accumulating debts, just as I had never mentioned similar embarrassments to my mother or Kate. For this reserve there were two reasons. I have never at any period known how much I owed, and I have always shrunk from unpleasant subjects of conversation.

We had been rapt in conversation for upwards of an hour

when a loud double knock announced the approach of the Waterloo hero. I had just time to caution Maud against giving him any hint of Wethercock's proposals, when he entered.

"Hallo, Westropp! I am happy to see you. Welcome back. And now, while I think of it, I have a crow to pluck with you."

"With me, sir?"

"Yes, with you. Here you have been full two months in Parliament, talking glibly away on all sorts of matters, and you have never once brought my brother's conduct before the House."

"Yes—very true. The fact is, I don't exactly see how it is to be done."

"Done! Why, nothing can be easier—by impeachment, of course. Burke was an Irish member like yourself, and did not he impeach the Governor-General of India—a greater man than that scoundrel, Colonel Etchingham?"

"Yes—he did—and it was a very famous case; but you know impeachments are very rare nowadays."

"Tut, tut, man; your friend O'Connell and a lot of his gang were impeached only a year ago;—and that was a famous case too."

There was no escaping this terrible man.

"I need not say, captain, I should be delighted to make any motion in the House that would be really likely to serve you; but just think calmly for a moment on what you ask me to do. This is a matter involving so much detail—"

“Detail? Oh, of course I’ll give you all the particulars with the greatest possible pleasure. Here they are in writing;—catch me ever forgetting anything!” And promptly opening a desk, he put in my hands a pile of letters and other documents, tied with red tape.

I stood aghast.

“The whole rascality of the judges is disclosed here in black and white. By Jove, sir, it will be a splendid case for impeachment! And such an opening for a young man, too! Why, you’ll make yourself famous by it;—and it will lead to my getting a property worth five thousand a year, to say nothing of the arrears.”

I was about to appease him by giving a rash promise, but I knew by experience that those people who are crack-brained on some particular subject have wonderful memories for things which their friends would like them to forget. I found it necessary, therefore, to observe caution, and avoid committing myself.

“I shall look over those papers,” said I, “when I have time, and if the state of public business permits, I will certainly—see what can be done.”

He had to rest contented with this very qualified and ambiguous promise, and I departed in the highest spirits, having arranged to call in the evening, and escort Maud to the theatre.

The captain was the veritable skeleton at the banquet—but then the banquet had been so long and so sweet that I could not grumble at the appearance of the skeleton towards

its close. Ah ! what were all the feverish dreams of hollow political intrigue, all the thorn-bestrewn heights ever scaled by the daring foot of ambition, compared with that one hour ?

CHAPTER VII.

FRIENDS IN COUNCIL.

I NOW proceeded to Dame Street, to call on a friend with whom I had important matters to discuss. In order to creep even into such a nominal amount of legal business as might keep my name before the eye of the public, the assistance of the lower branch of the profession was absolutely necessary ;—and not one of the great men with whom I had so lately dined could procure me that. I might be able to convince my constituents in Gulgreina that I took office solely with a view to their interests, though I had so often asserted that no earthly consideration should ever induce me to do so. But attorneys were not Gulgreinites. How was my eloquence to bewitch *them* ?

One of their number, at all events, Malachi Fitzsimon, was “a rough diamond,” a staunch, sincere, caustic friend, who never flattered me, but on whose wise advice, and, as far as possible, useful assistance, I knew by long experience I could always count in a hobble. To Malachi I accordingly repaired.

I shall never forget the cynical grin that overspread his face when I imparted my great secret to him.

"And so you hope to be solicitor-general in a few years?"

"Please God—when the Whigs come in."

He absolutely whistled in his enjoyment of the joke.

"And a judge, of course, shortly afterwards—perhaps a chief justice?"

"Well—all in good time."

"Faith, for a young man who has never held a brief, that's not so bad. But I was forgetting;—I did engage you once, and I never felt so ashamed of anything as the figure you cut."

"Malachi, my dear fellow, you are the only man I have to look to for help. Don't throw that wretched case in my teeth. You know I was a novice then—more than two years ago."

He looked very grave, but I continued to press him.

"Your hands are full of business. You must employ me in some case,—when the session is over, you know. Of course there is not the least hurry."

"Employ *you*! We are old friends, Jack, and I would do a great deal for the memory of your father, though he was a queer fellow enough. But really, if a cat of mine were charged with stealing cream—"

"You would not retain me for the defence. Of course not. That is the dread you attorneys always have of a beginner; and yet I could do it as well as Erskine. 'My

lord and gentlemen of the jury, in this case I have the honour of appearing before you as counsel for the cat of my respected friend, Mr. Malachi Fitzsimon. This animal, hitherto of irreproachable character, now stands charged with the serious offence of stealing cream. But on what does the whole case rest, gentlemen? On the uncorroborated testimony of the cook. Now, I need scarcely remind gentlemen of your great experience that on several most material points this wretched woman has flatly contradicted herself. You observed how she faltered and turned pale when I asked her how often she had entertained 158 Q in the kitchen;—once, twice, thrice, twenty times?"

"Jack," said Malachi, looking at his watch, "this is all very funny—for people who have nothing to do; but unfortunately I have business to attend to. I withdraw my charge. You *are* fit to defend a cat."

"But not a man, you would say? Just try me."

"Well, let us see. Would you like to apply to the Queen's Bench to make absolute a conditional order for removing by mandamus all the proceedings before the justices of Raheny, in a case of alleged illegal interment?"

"Well, that's rather a grave case to begin with. If it's all the same, I'd prefer something a little livelier."

"Very good. There are some nice points to be argued before the Lord Chancellor in the case of Kidds, minors."

"I don't like to meddle with babes and sucklings,—and as they are nice points, I'll leave them to epicures. *Paulo majora canamus.*"

"You are hard to be pleased, I fear. Here is a really interesting case, involving the right of way over a bit of land no better than a bog, to be fought out between Lord Moorland and his tenantry. You will have two or three hundred peasants to examine as to immemorial usor, and I have some very curious old charters to put in evidence."

"Malachi, you are very hard on a fellow,—and you forget I am only a beginner. Have you nothing agreeable?—no murder, no libel, no bigamy, no breach of promise?—not even a mysterious will case, for me to make a dash at?"

"I'll tell you what, Jack, you had better graduate in the police offices, as one or two very able men have done before you."

"I am sorry to say I graduated in them long ago. God be with poor Major Sirr¹! He always let me off because I laughed at his puns, and promised to profit by his sermons."

¹ It is well known that this singular man, who had tracked the windings of so many dark and dangerous conspiracies, was one of the principal agents in the suppression of the great Irish rebellion of 1798. It is not so well known that he subsequently became a police magistrate in Dublin, taking his seat on the bench at six o'clock every morning the whole year round, Sundays not excepted! He was a most original character, grim, fierce, and sardonic, and yet an inveterate punster, while his habit of sermonizing, and his copious stock of scriptural phraseology, might make him pass for one of Cromwell's "Ironsides," transferred by mistake to the nineteenth century. He retained up to his death on the 2nd January, 1841, the extraordinary strength and activity that had once made him so formidable.

"You are incorrigible.—Well, what say you to this? Three fellows charged under the Whiteboy Act with marching through K—— at the head of a strong force, with their faces blackened, playing on drums and fifes, breaking into the houses of some landed proprietors in the neighbourhood, and amusing themselves by firing at every one they met?"

"Glorious—capital—there is poetry in that! The White-boys are 'the white-headed boys' for me."

"Begad, though they are my clients, I think it a charity to have such pests to society transported, and I know they'll travel if you defend them; so I don't mind retaining you. The case won't be on till the Summer Assizes."

"So much the better, as I can keep working away in Parliament. The delay will give me time for preparation, and meanwhile there can be feelers thrown out in the *Firebrand*—'Extraordinary case! Startling disclosures expected! Fresh proof of British tyranny! The honourable member for Gulgreina specially retained for the defence!' A thousand thanks, Malachi. I see my way to making a tremendous hit in this case."

He "grinned horribly a ghastly smile."

"I am afraid I am scarcely doing my duty even by these poor devils in entrusting their defence to a harebrained youth who is sure to convict them;—but a man must stand to an old friend sometimes, and they *are* thorough scoundrels, though they have made me their attorney. But I'll give them a chance. I have a character to lose, and I'll take care to couple you with a clear-headed lawyer, who

will see that you don't run away with the case altogether."

And so we parted.

I left my friend's office in deep thought. I was already a parliamentary notability, and, ridiculous as it may seem, it was by eminence in parliament rather than at the bar that the great prizes of my profession were to be won. A display of brilliant, if frothy, oratory in this great case—for great I was determined to make it—would produce a powerful effect on public opinion in Ireland, and render it more than ever necessary for the Whigs, when reinstated in office, to buy off the independent opposition of so dangerous a patriot. The experiment, of course, was to be made upon a very worthless body, consisting of three miserable White-boy offenders;—and their attorney had frankly informed me that he knew my advocacy must ensure their conviction;—but what matter for that? If they were found guilty, and sentenced to transportation, they at once became martyrs, and thus attained the highest object to which they could aspire; and the whole national press would ring with denunciations of that infamous system of jury packing by which such results could be achieved. But I hoped better things. I trusted that my eloquence, acting on a patriotic jury, would deprive my clients of the crown of martyrdom they had so richly earned, and send them forth, "redeemed, regenerated, and disenthralled," to shoot right and left through the country, and terrify decent people with their blackened faces and their uproarious bands. In any case,

acquitted or convicted, *my* object would be secured, and those wretched clients, whose names I had not taken, and into the particulars of whose cases there was plenty of time to inquire, would become the stepping-stones of my fortune and my fame.

This important matter settled, I surrendered myself to social recreation with an easy mind during the few days I could afford to spend in Dublin. The enjoyment of my brief stay there was somewhat embittered by the consciousness that I had dark and fierce enemies, who lampooned me in newspapers, and spat their venom on me on platforms ;—nor was it pleasant to observe that O'Connell's strength was shaken and his influence undermined, and that a band of desperate unconstitutional men, who prated of swords and guns, were casting about for the means of forcing themselves into his place. But during that visit private happiness far more than counterbalanced public anxieties and annoyances. The presence of Maud Etchingham was as a sunshine of purity, love, and wisdom before which all clouds rolled away ; and when stern necessity compelled me once more to part from her for months, it was with the reluctance of one awakening from dreams of bliss to face a hostile world.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN WHICH THE PHŒNIX ARISES FROM HER ASHES.

SHORTLY after my return to London, I was walking one day down Regent Street, when a very handsome and elegantly dressed man smilingly accosted me, saying—

“I beg pardon, but I think I have had the pleasure of meeting you before. Mr. Ebenezer Pim, if I am not mistaken?”

I laughed heartily, as I recognized the Hon. Captain Bilkeley, whose acquaintance I had made in the Dublin Marshalsea. We shook hands warmly.

“I am glad that we meet under pleasanter auspices than we did last year,” said I.

“Well of course freedom is sweet; but the old monastery was not so bad for all that. I spent four months there, and enjoyed them too. What with the ball alley, the punch, the queer fellows with their stories and songs, it was great fun—sometimes; but I did observe you seemed wonderfully happy at leaving our hotel so suddenly. A petticoat, I’ll be bound—eh?” and he looked very sly.

I assented, inly wondering as I reflected that at the period

of my imprisonment—not eleven months ago—I was deeply in love with the perfidious Charlotte.

“ Well, when you are a married man like me, maybe you’ll not be sorry for a few months off duty, now and then. By-the-bye, I must congratulate you on making such a hit in the House. You have become quite famous.”

“ Thanks—and how do you occupy yourself, may I ask ? ”

“ Not at much good, I’m sorry to say ; but if you’ll dine with me at six o’clock, I’ll let you see how I live. I was a fool to leave the service, thinking there was nothing like an idle life ;—but it can’t be helped now.”

Captain Bilkeley, with a kind heart, and polished and fascinating manners, was one of a large class at once worthless, pitiable, and dangerous, men who have no object in life beyond the amusement of the passing hour. Let no man who *has* any object in life associate with such. Having no regard for the value of time themselves, they naturally don’t care how much they waste that of others, and the vacuity of their wasted and purposeless lives leaves them constantly open to the worst temptations. That very night Bilkeley introduced me to a hell—what a pity the vicious things of life are so seldom, as in this case, called by their real names !—where I foolishly consented to join in a game of unlimited loo. We have often heard it said that the devil is fond of tempting novices with deceptive successes. He was not so malicious in my case, for I was in very bad luck ; and I suppose I should have thought it highly fortunate that I was rapidly cleared out of the few pounds I had about me,

and which I wanted badly at the time. Bilkeley, the most good-natured of men, at once offered me the use of his purse; but happily I had strength of mind enough to resist yielding to a temptation whose dangerous results I had so often observed in others, and, vexed and disgusted with my own folly in going thus far, I declined touching another card that night. I also made a firm resolution, on which I have acted through life, never to play again except as an amusement among intimate friends and for merely nominal stakes. Fortunately I have always found that the game of politics had sufficiently feverish excitement for me,—until it was played out.

During the course of the session I frequently met Bilkeley, dined with him two or three times, and was introduced to his wife. I always found him a kind and agreeable companion, but I observed with pain that the infatuation of gambling had taken a strong hold upon him, and I endeavoured, but in vain, to check him in a course whose results I knew must be ruinous.

Meanwhile my own career was neither strictly exemplary nor peculiarly fortunate. I maintained, it is true, the parliamentary reputation I had already won, but the millstone of debt was becoming fast bound around my neck, and though in constant correspondence with Maud, I had not the moral courage to enlighten her on this painful subject. Such a state of things always leads to a rapid climax. One evening towards the close of May I rashly purchased a pair of kid gloves in a large shop where I occasionally dealt, and

gave in payment a cheque on the Bank of England for ten pounds, alleging that the bank had just closed for the day. The shopman knew my position as a public man, and had no hesitation in giving me my change, with thanks. Unfortunately it appeared on inquiry that I had already overdrawn my account at the bank. One or two gentle reminders to that effect from the tradesman elicited replies from me that all would be right in a few days, and at last I was startled by receiving a summons to appear at Bow Street Police Office, and show cause why information should not be taken against me for obtaining a pair of gloves and the sum of nine pounds, fifteen shillings and sixpence, under false and fraudulent pretences.

Here was a position for a member of the legislature, and a prospective candidate for judicial honours! I candidly explained my plight to two or three fellow senators, who were constantly in serious scrapes themselves, and received most generous offers of the use of their signatures in any negotiations with London discounters. It was with much of that feeling of swelling confidence which forerunneth a fall that I called at the office of old Fleeceman in the Strand, and applied for a loan of a hundred pounds for three months. The suspicious rascal shook his head when he heard of my securities. Personally he believed them gentlemen of high honour (and slender means—no unusual combination), but his friend Naylor, in the city, who was the monied partner in the concern, had a curious prejudice in favour of men of commercial standing. Could I not

procure the signature of one of such? Impossible, just then. On the other hand, could not *he*, as a sort of compromise, let me have half the amount I asked for? Equally impossible. Forty—thirty—even the absurdly small sum of fifteen pounds—no; every request was alike met by a *non possumus*. To hear the estimation in which some of our most conspicuous Irish members were held by that miserable old usurer, would almost suffice to make a patriot despair of the republic.

I left his office in a state of mind bordering on frenzy. That wretched summons was to come on next day! Why had I not written to Lofthouse, and explained my plight, in time? It was too late now. Bilkeley was the most generous of men, when in funds, but he had been losing heavily, and I had met him the day before, looking woe-begone and haggard; and I could think of no one else in London to apply to. Before that hour to-morrow it might be my fate to be sent for trial on the criminal charge, besides being gibbeted in the press. How was that doom to be avoided? It was a terrible question. My flesh quivered and my brain reeled with the agony of apprehension. Things had sometimes looked as black with me in Dublin; but all historians acknowledge the great advantage of fighting our battles on our native soil; and now I was a stranger in a strange land.

As usual in similar emergencies, I retired to the solitude of my own chamber to reflect. Even in that dread crisis the old instinct awoke within me. I should in some way

uake this crowning defeat conducive to my ultimate triumph. But how?—how? I invoked the muse of invention with a cigar. Under the influence of the soothing weed a thousand brilliant schemes suggested themselves to me. Alas ! they all ended, as they began, in smoke. An hour of invaluable time rolled rapidly away. Dejected, weary, and worn, I felt that horrible summons haunting me like a spectre. The hour for answering it grew fatally near. The ominous clock kept on ticking its notes of doom. The whole horizon was overcast with black clouds and mustering tempests.

A friend of statesmen, indeed !—a future judge—a solicitor-general—why, the very Pole with the unpronounceable name, who had married Charlotte De Lacy—ha ! that word “ Pole ” at last supplied me with the long-sought-for clue to a possible extrication from my difficulties. Poland was the very Lazarus of nations ; why should not London, the Dives of cities, grant her relief through my instrumentality ? Rapidly seizing on a sheet of foolscap, I wrote in round hand the words “ Kosciusko Committee,” subjoined as president, vice-president, and secretary, those very Irish members whose names had just been treated with such contumely, appointed myself treasurer, and ruled columns for the pounds, shillings, and pence of intending subscribers. Armed with this very business-like document, I hurried forth, and soon found myself in Piccadilly.

My first call was at the residence of the wealthy, soft-hearted, and somewhat soft-headed Earl of Fontenoy, a

notoriously ardent sympathizer with oppressed nationalities, and who had greeted me most warmly in the House of Commons on the occasion of my maiden speech. I was fortunate enough to find his lordship disengaged.

“My dear earl, this is such a pleasure,” I said, producing the portentous scroll. “A few of us have at last resolved on making a vigorous effort for the relief of the Poles, trodden under the hoof of Russian despotism.”

That sonorous word “hoof,” by the way, had often stood me in good stead during my agitations. Weak-minded listeners always think there must be so much in a strong word!

“I am delighted to hear it, Mr. Westropp.”

“Need I say,” I continued, “we have unanimously fixed on your lordship as the most suitable man in all England to head the list?”

“Ha!—hum!—yes; pray sit down, my dear sir. Let me see;”—and he put on his spectacles. I saw at a glance that he was secured to the good cause, and, afraid of his zeal flagging, kept pelting him with flowers of rhetoric.

“It makes one’s blood freeze to think of the state this unhappy land has been reduced to—her fields laid waste—her cities ruined—her very name a byword and a reproach! You remember the words of the poet, my lord—

‘Hope for a season bade the world farewell,
And freedom shrieked as Kosciusko fell.’”

“Ha!—very nice, very pretty indeed.”

“May that shriek pierce the ear of England till she

awakens to a sense of her awful responsibility towards oppressed nations !”

“ Very good—very nice—I see you are really an earnest man ;”—producing a ten pound note.

“ When I think of all I have suffered for my bleeding country, I feel that I could gladly go through it all again—ay, and more—to rescue fair Poland from the iron gripe of oppression.”

“ I admire that sentiment, Mr. Westropp. It reminds me of a very humorous remark I once heard in a charity sermon—‘ Charity is said to begin at home ; but it should not end there.’ Ha ha ha !”

“ Ha ha !” I joined in his laughter at this brilliant and original observation. “ Really clergymen should not be so witty in the pulpit. It is not fair.—Then I presume I may put your lordship down—”

“ For ten pounds ; without the slightest hesitation. Though, let me see—this will be an extensive organization, I daresay ? ”

“ Very ; for my part I won’t shrink from throwing my whole energies into it.”

“ I see, I see. And a good deal may be expected from a man in my position ? ”

“ We leave that altogether to your lordship’s own feelings. The name of Fontenoy is always known to be the first in every good work.”

“ Thanks. Then let me see—perhaps twenty pounds would look better at the head of a list ? ”

"Well, perhaps so. I think, indeed, it would have a greater moral effect."

"And might induce others to give more largely—eh?"

"Your lordship's penetration astonishes me. It would certainly be likely to do so."

"Then I don't think the money could be better spent."

"I am quite of that opinion."

"This is a great day for Poland," I mused, as I put twenty pounds dreamily in my purse. "Methinks I shall see the glorious phoenix of liberty arising from the very ashes of her thralldom!"

"What are your precise plans, Mr. Westropp?" asked the philanthropic nobleman, as if suddenly recollecting that he had parted somewhat rashly with his money.

"Our precise plans—hem! your lordship wishes for information concerning them?"

"Certainly; if you will be so good."

"Well, of course it's not so easy to explain everything at a single interview. There are matters of detail still to be arranged; but I am happy to say we shall leave the fullest liberty of action to individuals, without trenching on the collective motion of the community."

"I don't exactly understand—"

"I regret I have not conveyed myself more clearly. What I would intimate is, that the central committee will always distinctly recognize the right of individual initiative; but I need not say, we cordially solicit the co-operation of others, and aim at establishing between ourselves and the

tributary and affiliated bodies such a perfect harmony of action as may best further the common objects we have all at heart. I trust your lordship follows me ? ”

“ Oh, perfectly, perfectly. ”—And he tried to look wise.

“ Perhaps your lordship has never organized an undertaking with so many necessary ramifications as the Kosciusko Committee ? ”

“ Never ;—but I hope it will all lead to the poor Poles being better fed and clothed, and rescued from slavery. ”

“ My dear lord, you little know—you never *can* know—what good you have this day done to the oppressed, trembling upon the very brink of ruin. ”

I spoke these words with genuine warmth. I felt deeply, indeed, the all-important service he had rendered me, and as I parted from him with a cordial shake hands, I could not but own, thorough democrat though I was, that the English aristocracy was in many respects a most admirable institution.

Though now provided with the means of settling the case brought against me, which I did that very night, I could not resist the temptation of enlisting further sympathy on behalf of the down-trodden Poles. I accordingly devoted occasional afternoons to this philanthropic mission with various success. Some there were who refused to hearken to the voice of the charmer. The tough old Scottish peer Lord Tantallon “ could not see it. ” The dowager Lady Closekeepit was strongly of opinion that Irishmen and Poles ought to work hard for their daily bread, like Englishmen

and Scotchmen. Sir Grimsby Preachett refused to contribute to matters of this sort, on principle. I was not disheartened, however, by these rebuffs ; and for the honour of human nature I have much pleasure in recording that the purses of the aristocracy were for the most part freely opened to me,—so much so, that the *Times* of a couple of days later contained, under the head of “thanks,” the acknowledgment of John Wardlaw Westropp, M.P., treasurer of the Kosciusko Committee, for a hundred and ten pounds, with the names of the respective contributors.

Certain fellow senators were delighted at the boldness and fertility of resource by which I had thus turned disaster into triumph. I cordially owned the free use I had made of their names as president, etc., and having looked in at the House, where I spoke for a short while in support of a bill for the more effectual suppression of frauds by trustees, I entertained my friends and allies at a sumptuous supper, at which we drank to the memories of Sobieski and Kosciusko—by no means in solemn silence.

I lent my own name to these compatriots just as freely as I had borrowed theirs, and I have no reason to doubt, so great was their ingenuity, with an equally beneficial result.

I followed up this charitable organization with such ardour that, before a fortnight had elapsed, I had collected upwards of five hundred pounds on behalf of the suffering Poles. There is certainly much good in human nature, if you only know how to get at it. I had got at it. Pope says it was invention that raised Homer so much above other geniuses ;

it has done still more for me ;—it has often saved me from ruin. We have been cautioned against “speaking disrespectfully of the Equator ” :—let no man in my presence dare to make little of the Poles !

CHAPTER IX.

IN WHICH I EXPLORE A MYSTERY OF INIQUITY.

THUS, though my first parliamentary season was not altogether unclouded, it proved upon the whole eminently pleasant and successful. The example I had set was quickly followed by various philanthropists, animated, I have no doubt, by a singleness of purpose nowise inferior to my own. The cause of the oppressed Poles was warmly advocated through the medium of concerts, conversaziones, lectures, readings, and charity sermons ; and the wealthy inhabitants of London were thus afforded ample opportunities of contributing to the relief of their more needy brethren.

These demonstrations had the effect of calling special attention to the merits of an opera entitled, as well as I recollect, "*I dolóri di Varsovi*," the scene of which was laid in Warsaw, and which had a very successful run this season. I was present one memorable night at this opera, the plot of which was simplicity itself. The villain of the piece, Towrowski, a Russian prince (bass), did all that in him lay to obtain forcible possession of the lovely Paulina (soprano), taking a mean advantage of the fettered condition of her

lover Varsovi (tenor), a Polish nobleman. The melodious screeches into which Paulina bursts when Towrowski attempts to seize her hand have the singular effect of making him join her in song, his deep growlings in turn giving the cue to his rival Varsovi to strike in with his charming tenor voice, and all three warbling away in the most cunning harmony. The public always like to hear of the triumph of virtue, and I am happy to say that in the last scene, amid a terrific crash of wind instruments, and thunder produced by the banging of gongs behind the scenes, six uncombed warriors of the desert rush desperately in, tear the fetters off Varsovi, and fix them on the caitiff Towrowski, whom they drag away to work in the mines of Siberia. Varsovi and Paulina then embrace, advance to the footlights, and, summoning all their energies for a great effort, burst into harmony. I give the English version.

PAU. Now in Hymen's bonds united,

VAR. Sweetest source of endless pleasure,

PAU. Both our hearts in union plighted,

VAR. Richer than Golconda's treasure.

PAU. Am I not thine, love ?

VAR. Yes, thou art mine, love !

PAU. Shall fate e'er sever

VAR. Hearts joined for ever ?

Both.

Thus glorious,

Victorious,

With joys that are fit for the angels above,

We're brightening,

And lightening

The sorrows of earth with the raptures of love,

Of love, of love,

The sorrows of e-e-e-earth with the raptures of lo-o-o-ove !

Trilling and thrilling amidst a scene of the wildest enthusiasm, and rapturous shouts of *encore*.

Why are the absurdities of opera so delightful, I wonder? With all our talk of progress, I fear *vox et preterea nihil* is the motto most applicable to mankind. Let Emerson or Carlyle arise from the grave to-morrow, and announce a series of lectures in London, charging a shilling for admission, and let Grisi, Mario, and Lablache set up their opposition shop round the corner, at half a guinea, and who can doubt that the tuneful trio would beat either philosopher hollow in power of attraction?

It was near eleven as I quitted the theatre. I had scarcely found myself in the open air when my attention was attracted by a tall and closely muffled female figure. This person, who evidently studied complete disguise, proceeded towards a cab which was in attendance, and which must have been hired in advance, as she did not exchange a single word with the driver. As she was about to step into the cab, the hood covering her face fell partially down, and the light of a lamp revealed the well-known features of Charlotte, Countess von Pultuthowski!

I started with horror. What!—Charlotte, whom I had loved so wildly a year ago as Charlotte De Lacy, alone at night in the streets of London, without any escort, and obviously shrinking from all observation! No good could come from such conduct. I must solve the mystery of her appearance there, and interfere to save her, perhaps from ruin. But how? Should I rush forward, acknowledge that

I had discovered her, and offer her my protection and counsel, as an old friend? Such was my first impulse; but it was immediately checked as reflection told me that my proffered assistance would most likely be rejected with scorn, and in that event I should do more harm than good. My best plan, therefore, was simply to watch the course of events, myself unseen; and accordingly I stole cautiously into the darkest spot I could select, still keeping my eye carefully fixed on the cab.

It remained stationary for some ten minutes, till long after the whole fashionable throng lately assembled in the theatre had swept by. The time seemed interminable; and agitated alike by impatience, suspense, curiosity, pity, sorrow, and a vague feeling of thankfulness for that legendary sore thumb which had prevented my fate from being linked with such a woman, I was about at all hazards to rush forth and reveal myself, when a light graceful figure stepped out of the theatre, and Signor Pulciani himself sprang into the cab, which drove rapidly away.

Horror of horrors! Did I dream? Was this some dreadful nightmare? Or was I really standing there, in the heart of London, doomed to witness depravity so shocking? I had never seen this ill-fated woman since the delightful day we had passed together at the Dargle. For months after that, as the reader knows, I had feasted upon her image, while she was secretly laughing at me, watching to see if my prospects would brighten, and carrying on a correspondence with a half-starved Polish count. She had since wheedled this poor dupe into marriage, and now,

enticed by the wealth and the blandishments of a famous Italian singer, she had eloped !

Well, I was in the secret at all events, and I resolved, at whatever sacrifice of time and trouble, to explore this mystery of iniquity to the uttermost. With this view I returned to the theatre, trembling from head to foot with a thousand agitated feelings, and asked for an interview, on urgent business, with the manager, a shrewd homely man named Morrison, whom I knew well. It was granted without difficulty, and yet when I attempted to inform Morrison of the scene I had just witnessed, I felt scarcely able to speak.

“ Oh, Mr. Westropp, I am delighted to see you. Sit down. Why, you are looking quite pale.—Capital house, wasn’t it ? ”

“ Yes ;—but I have something to tell you. You are a family man, and I’ll make your hair stand on end with horror.”

“ Bless me ! I knew you were not looking well. Just let me ring for brandy, to steady your nerves.”

“ Thanks—no, no. This Signor Pulciani—”

“ Beautiful tenor, isn’t he ? ”

“ Yes—but I don’t care a pin about his voice. The tenor of his conduct—”

“ Ha ha ha ! Very good—capital ! The tenor of his conduct ! ”

“ Excuse me. Nothing could be farther from my thoughts than making a pun, but really I scarcely know what I am saying. This man’s conduct has been so base—”

“Base!—good—base! The tenor of his conduct has been so base. Oh, very good—very good, indeed. You Irishmen are so droll. Ha ha ha! I owe you one.”

“You will drive me mad with your nonsense. Why, I thought you were a man of business! Can you listen to reason for a moment, without suspecting a joke in every word I utter?”

“Very good—by all means. Please go on.”

“Well, this Signor Pulciani—”

“Wonderful shake, hasn’t he?”

“I’ll shake you to some purpose, if you interrupt me. I say this tenor, this Pulciani, this rascal, has just run away with another man’s wife!”

“You don’t say so?”

“I saw him.”

“You did? Well, that’s the funniest thing I ever heard in my life!”

“Is it? Then I don’t envy you your notions of fun. To me it is simply diabolical.”

“Oh, of course, of course. I am a married man myself, and that’s no joke. But what puzzles me is to think how it could possibly happen. Run away with another man’s wife? Why, I never knew any one that seemed fonder of his own!”

“Then that wretched female, whoever she is, may prepare for horrors. Within the last ten minutes I saw a lady of rank, of family, of beauty—oh, heaven, she was once engaged

to myself!" Here my agitation became so excessive that I had to pause for a moment. Morrison listened, apparently deeply interested.

"I saw her getting into a cab, alone—muffled—evidently skulking from observation. She little knew whose eye was fixed on her! I saw this villain jump in afterwards, and drive away with her."

"Dear me, how shocking! I can quite understand your feelings now. And if it's not too great a liberty, might I venture to ask her name?"

"I don't mind telling you in confidence, Morrison. It was my old friend Miss De Lacy, now Countess von Pultuthowski."

"His wife!"

My companion could now indulge his merriment unchecked. I saw in a moment the absurd mistake I had made, and felt amazed that, with all my boasted knowledge of the world, no suspicion of the real truth had once flashed across my mind.

Morrison explained that the Count von Pultuthowski desired to maintain his incognito. His title, though dignified, was obviously harsh, while that of Signor Pulciani was melodious, and suitable to Italian opera. This was a sufficiently intelligible reason; but Morrison grinned as he informed me that there was another, which may astonish some readers—viz., family pride! It would never do for a Count of ancient lineage, united to one of the De Lacys of Miltown Malbay, to confess that his paternal 250*l.* a year

was insufficient for their suitable joint maintenance, and that he was now earning thirty pounds a night, by delighting the British public with his siren strains. Had he earned a tenth part of the sum by propounding bad law, or worse theology, he would doubtless have gladly admitted, nay gloried in the feat. Truly a mad world, my masters.

CHAPTER X.

SUNSHINE IN THE PARK.—SUNRISE ON THE THAMES.

ONE would think that while residing in London a man could keep quite clear of the bores in Dublin ; but the following letter will prove that such is not always the case :—

“ DEAR WESTROPP,

“I have not heard a word from you yet about the impeachment, and I am watching the papers every day, particularly *the notices of motion*. But I suppose you have been up to your eyes in work, studying the *very important papers* I lent you, and mastering the whole case. For mercy's sake be sure to expose ALL THE VILLAINY of Colonel —— and the J——. A man must be careful not to put names on paper in a case like this, as they say Government sometimes takes to *opening private letters*. More shame for them. So mum's the word. If you want any more information before opening proceedings, let me know, and I'll send it *by a sure hand*, so as not to run any risk with the post. I can scarcely sleep with anxiety as the time

draws near. Pray write at once and let me know *when you will begin*. Maud sends her love.

“Sincerely yours,

“H. J. ETCHINGHAM.”

The reader may laugh at the extreme absurdity of this letter, and indeed I could not help laughing at it myself ; but it embarrassed me a good deal too. I must shortly return to Ireland ; and yet I had never even opened those mystic documents over which I was supposed to have pondered so profoundly. Fortunately they were safe and intact in my portmanteau ; and summoning up the courage of desperation, I broached the precious bundle.

The more I tried to master the contents of these papers, the more hopelessly confused and perplexing did they become. Tying them up again, therefore, and putting them carefully by, I wrote to the gallant captain by return of post. While acknowledging the somewhat vague promise I had made, that “if the state of public business this session permitted, I should see what could be done,” I regretted that it would be quite impossible to bring on any motion of great importance till the question of free trade was settled, adding, that after a careful examination of his papers, I feared the *damnosa hereditas* could only be recovered, if at all, by the exertions of skilled Queen’s Counsel. I sweetened this unsatisfactory reply by some lively anecdotes and some personal compliments, and explained my dilemma in a letter to Maud, who fortunately succeeded in inducing her father to postpone all further proceedings indefinitely.

Amidst the gaities of life in London I was continually haunted by the consciousness that I was in a glaringly false position, and that, not alone on my own account, but for the sake of the dear girl who had entrusted her future happiness to my keeping, that position must ere long be rectified. My spurs must be won by far harder work than making speeches in Parliament. I must tear myself away from the drawing-rooms of Belgravia at the very height of the season, and hasten to the dingy old court-house in K——, there to toil like a cart-horse, with the certainty of having my every word keenly scrutinized, and the probability of finding all my hopes of forensic success shattered by some unlucky blunder. The prospect was not an inviting one, but it was only by making a hit at the bar that the great ultimate objects of my ambition could be attained. And then I should meet with Maud once more! Had it not been for my engagement with her, I believe I should have flung to the winds all the hopes I had been founding on the Whiteboy trial, since it must compel me to leave London at the close of June. But time and the Assizes were inexorable.

I was revolving these considerations as I strolled into Hyde Park on the evening before my departure for Ireland. Everything around me looked bright and beautiful, as if tempting me to remain in luxurious idleness. The glorious sun shone on crowds whose brilliant equipages thronged the park, and amongst whom, though the veriest of charlatans, I might yet be considered somebody, com.

pared with those namelessly insignificant creatures, the butterflies of fashion and the hour. I was rapt in thought, and was already in imagination in the K—— court-house, lashing myself into a frenzy of indignant eloquence on behalf of those Whiteboy clients, whom their own attorney had characterized as such ruffians, when I was roused from my reverie by a salute from a very distinguished-looking woman in a barouche. I took off my hat mechanically, and on looking up to ascertain who was my friend, was surprised to see the Countess von Pultuthowski. Since our ever memorable day in the Dargle I had not seen Charlotte except on the night after leaving the theatre, when I had so completely misconstrued her conduct; and I felt myself blushing deeply as I recalled these two dates, each in its way so strangely agitating. I said long ago that the tall, dark, slovenly girl with whom I used to play in childhood, had somehow sprung up into a lovely young woman. Fine feathers make fine birds; and her beauty was now further heightened by the splendour of her dress and equipage, and the easy air of superiority which the consciousness of such splendour imparts.

I was beside her in a moment. It is wonderful how the flight of time softens asperities and removes misunderstandings. We who had agitated, enraptured, embittered, almost wrecked each other's lives, were now chatting easily together, without making the slightest allusion to bruised thumbs or broken promises.

"This is the first time I have been able to congratulate

you on your marriage," said I, smiling. "I am happy to see you have got among the nobility, like Kate."

"Yes, and you—you are a great man, Jack. I hope to see you prime minister yet."

I laughed as I replied, "There is little chance of office for a poor man in England."

"A poor man!" and she looked unfeignedly amazed.

"Ay—as poor as a church mouse. But no matter—I don't grumble. I am like the man on the Manx half-penny—I always contrive to fall on my legs."

"I am anxious for a long chat with you," said she. "You must promise to dine with us the first evening you are disengaged."

"I should be delighted, but I have to start for Ireland to-morrow on special business."

"Dear me, what a pity! Kosciusko would be so happy to meet you. He has heard a great deal of you."

"Kosciusko!" I started at the name. "Who can that be?"

"My husband. He was christened Thaddeus Stanislaus Petrovski Kosciusko, but I call him by his last name. I think it the nicest."

"How singular! I may almost claim him for a namesake, for you must know they nicknamed me 'Kosciusko Westropp';—(I did so much for the Poles)," I added, after a slight pause, and in a sort of modest soliloquy.

"That's very funny. How I should like you to see Kosciusko! I mostly call him Kossy, for shortness."

I was strongly tempted to tell her that I had had that pleasure already, and that I had heard him too; but as it was in strict confidence that Morrison had informed me of that gentleman's identity with Signor Pulciani, of course I had to refrain. We conversed pleasantly for some time, and an expressive glance from her dark eyes at parting revived some long buried emotions; but no word passed between us that might not have been faithfully reported to the hero of the "wonderful shake." Considering the nature of our intimacy in Ireland, however, it was all the better, perhaps, for her and me and others, that our acquaintance was only renewed as I was about to leave London.

After I had parted from her, and quitted the park, I met Captain Bilkeley, of whom I had lost sight some time. He was shabbily dressed, a fact which one would scarcely notice in a man of such natural ease and grace of demeanour; but there was a haggard look about his face, and a fierce glare in his eye, that I did not like.

"Well, Bilkeley, how goes it?—you don't look well."

"It would be hard for me, when all is up with me." He seemed utterly reckless, and without any trace of his habitual amiability and courtesy.

"Sorry for it; but you know we Irish gentlemen are always in scrapes. The worse luck now—"

"The same another time," said he, bitterly. "Can you lend me ten pounds, like a good fellow?"

The universal balsam! Of course I knew instinctively

that some such request was coming, and while unwilling to part with so much of the little still left me to one who evidently would make no good use of it, I was equally unwilling to refuse Bilkeley's application altogether. He had always been a kind friend to me when it was in his power.

"I won't see you floored," I replied, "but I am in low water enough just now, and must start for Ireland to-morrow to work hard at my profession. I can't possibly stand more than a fiver. Come on with me to Mivart's."

He thanked me warmly.

"And you are going to fling away this poor five pounds at loo?" I asked.

"Something tells me I shall turn it into a thousand. I feel that my confounded luck will change to-night. It is time for it."

I felt strongly tempted to tell him that he was labouring under the delusion of all gamblers, that miserable infatuated race who so recklessly fling away time, health, money, and character, live in a sickly atmosphere of wastefulness and selfishness, feed themselves on false hopes, and die beggars. But my own career had not been spotless. It was not for my

"Brother rake to see
That miracle, a moralist in me,"

above all men, and I had always made a point of adding to the value of a gift by the manner of the giving. At the same time, I was deeply impressed with the conviction that I could perform no more meritorious action than

detaining this unfortunate young man from the gaming table.

We were now in Mivart's, and going to my desk I handed him a five pound note. His eye brightened.

"I wish you all success," said I, "but where is the necessity of leaving me on my last night in London?"

"To make money," he cried hoarsely, tossing off a glass of brandy. "I shall send you ten times the amount to-morrow, Westropp. I know I'll win to-night."

"Can nothing coax you even to play a quiet game with a friend, for small stakes? I have engagements for to-night, but I shall willingly break them if you will join me at backgammon, or *ecarté*, or—"

"Or, why don't you say 'beggar my neighbour' at once?" he asked with something like a sneer. "No, no, Westropp, the time for child's play is past. You are a good fellow, and you won't stand between me and my luck. You know the saying—'While money holds, luck will turn.'"

Oh, wretched madness! I saw that all attempts to check his horrible infatuation were utterly in vain, and parted from him with no little reluctance. After transacting some shopping, and writing a few letters, I looked in for a while at the House, to make arrangements on matters of business with fellow members, and closed the day by joining some jovial friends at supper. We carried our revels far into the brief summer night, and some faint rays were beginning to streak the sky as we broke up.

We were in Charing Cross, and none of us had any

business at the Surrey side of the river. But I had long been desirous of seeing the sun rise on the Thames. Of course, the effect of such a phenomenon must be faint compared with its grandeur when observed from a lofty mountain peak, or from the cliffs that present their bold front to the swell of the Atlantic in my native Clare. But to a contemplative mind there was an unspeakable solemnity in beholding the gorgeous luminary gradually lighting up the waves of the old historic river that flows through the greatest of the world's cities—

“When all the mighty heart is lying still,”

as Wordsworth has it, and before the smoke and din and uproar of Babylon make those glorious rays turn faint and sickly. This was a treat which I had never yet enjoyed, though often resolved to do so, and it was one which I was heterodox enough to believe could be seen to much better advantage by a late goer to bed than by an early riser. I suggested it to my companions, who at once agreed to accompany me to Westminster Bridge. They were not exactly the persons whom a young gentleman disposed to wax sentimental would select in such circumstances ;—but there they were, and on we went, indulging in idle noisy chat, and bursting every now and then into snatches of uproarious song. It was the ugly old river, of course, of the pre-embankment times which the rising generation do not recollect, but still it was the Thames.

Arrived at Westminster Bridge, I allowed my hilarious

friends to take the lead, and slunk quietly behind, endeavouring to work my mind up to the due pitch of enthusiasm befitting a lover of nature. As usually happens when determinations of this sort are formed of malice prepense, I did not succeed. The sun was there, but where was the sentiment? I was fast wandering into very commonplace considerations immediately concerning myself and my prospects, when I was startled by seeing a man's figure springing over the bridge.

I ran horror-stricken to my friends, whom I found in the unnerved condition of witnesses of a catastrophe which they were wholly unable to remedy. It was with feelings of no slight relief we observed that there was a boatman on the river, and that he pulled rapidly towards the unfortunate self-destroyer, whom he succeeded with much difficulty and at great risk in dragging on board. Anxious to see if we could be of any use in an emergency so shocking, we all hurried to the river steps, where the gallant boatman speedily joined us. Imagine my feelings when the well-known features of the Hon. Captain Bilkeley, locked in the embrace of death, were disclosed to my view!

It is not in the power of words to describe the horror of that moment. All was over. All help was too late. My wretched friend had played his last game. There was nothing found in his purse but a scrap of paper, on which he had written—"I can't face the world again, and must try the river. God help my poor wife and child."

It was only at that dread moment that a strange coinci-

dence occurred to my recollection. It was on that day twelvemonth I had first made the acquaintance of my unhappy friend in the Dublin Marshalsea, on the very day after my exploits with Charlotte at the Lover's Leap. Strangely, indeed, had "the whirligig of time brought in his revenges."

Oh, black sullen river, that holdest the key to so many dread mysteries, what a termination were thy waves to the career of the ruined gambler! I had gone to the bridge to gratify an empty sentiment, and I had been preached an awful sermon. Darkest, saddest, mournfullest of days! The deepest tragedy of my life had been serenely gilded by that sunrise on the Thames.

CHAPTER XI.

IN WHICH MY APPEARANCE CAUSES THE SOVEREIGN DEMOS TO ARISE IN ITS MIGHT.

GOING to bed after such a tragedy was out of the question. My friends and I made a collection for the boatman whose heroism had jeopardized his own life, and attended a hastily assembled coroner's jury, before whom I detailed my transactions of the previous evening with the deceased, and who had the sagacity to find that he had committed suicide, by drowning himself while in a state of temporary insanity. An intolerable burden seemed crushing me down all that day. I went mechanically about London, called on a few intimate friends, and arranged some necessary business before starting in the afternoon, but I felt all the time like a man oppressed by a dread waking nightmare. In the fitful snatches of slumber I obtained in the railway carriage that whirled me through England, the overpowering horror was continually present, and it aggravated the agonies of my sea-sickness while crossing the channel. These feelings were caused not less by affection for the poor fellow who was gone, than by the awful nature of the event itself. "I could have better spared a better

man." Bilkeley was one of those easy, good-natured, obliging fellows, who usually become far dearer to us than men of greater power of intellect and force of character. I found some consolation in reflecting that in our last interview I had tried to save him from himself. Many a scene passed between us since our first meeting thronged upon my memory with ghastly distinctness; and I had a painful feeling that henceforth this tragedy must remain continually present to my mind. But so strangely are we constituted that three days afterwards it affected me very little more than *Macbeth*, or any other imaginative work of appalling power might have done—

"And other voices speak, and other sights surround."

I had in truth quite enough of my own affairs to occupy me on arriving in Ireland. After a brief but delightful interview with Maud, I hurried down with Malachi Fitzsimon to K——, where the great Whiteboy case was about to come on at last. I was rejoiced to find that he had retained as my leader Paul Magee, a rough, homely northern, without any pretensions to eloquence, but still a sound scholar, gifted with that vulgar humour which juries understand and admire, and inferior as a criminal lawyer to no man in the empire. The good humour of this "Plain Jock" was imperturbable.

"I am glad to find I have such an eloquent junior," said he, shaking hands with me. "Just leave me the law and the arguments, and *do you take the floweries.*"

These were quite my own views; but what could our

united efforts avail in a plain case like this, and against a bar led by the Solicitor-General and Abel Brunker, Q.C., the most formidable and many-sided athlete of the profession? Malachi informed us that our respectable clients had been caught literally red-handed in the commission of the offences charged against them, and that they had long been known as amongst the worst characters in their district and country. I groaned. What was to become of my great speech? Why had I left London?

"I am afraid, Magee," said I, "that neither your law nor my 'floweries,' as you call them, will be of much use here. The game is up."

"Nonsense, man—the game is never up till the verdict is given. Everything depends on the jury. I hope we are likely to have a good one, Fitzsimon?"

"I think so. There are very few resident gentry within a wide circuit. Two of these are in the light of prosecutors here, one is laid up with gout, and the rest are amusing themselves on the Continent."

"Good—very good—and the national papers have been paving the way for us capitally. I don't think a jury of K—farmers could be in a better state of mind than at present. And of course we can have a strong *alibi* or two—eh?"

"Gracious heavens, Magee, what do you mean?" I exclaimed. "An *alibi*!—why, hasn't Fitzsimon just told us the police have actually caught these fellows in the act?"

He grinned, as only your "criminal lawyer" can grin.

"I see you are a mere baby, Westropp. No doubt

there may be a strong *primâ facie* case against us—from the Crown point of view ; but we have to think of ourselves, not of the enemy. The police will swear hard, of course ;—that is their business. They are poor devils on fourteen shillings a week, and want honour and glory and promotion, and the large rewards offered for the suppression of White-boys. Will such men stick at a trifle? Won't a jury attach far more weight to the evidence of independent witnesses, in a case of identification?" And here he favoured me with a diabolically cunning leer.

"Yes, Magee, I give it up. I *am* a baby in these matters. I thought I knew a thing or two, but I find a man has to become a 'criminal lawyer' to have his eyes opened thoroughly. I'm afraid we have a very dirty case."

"So much the more reason for us to throw all the mud we can. Some of it is sure to stick."

"And have we no merits at all?"

"Pshaw! What does a K—— jury want with merits?"

All this sounded hopeful, and my spirits began to rise as I heard of some peculiar evidence for the defence, which will appear in due course ; but I think I have given quite enough of our edifying consultation. In private life there was no more honourable man than Paul Magee, and the reader is aware that Malachi was an excellent fellow, though he did on one occasion shave a friend "for nothing, and give him a drink," in the words of an old legend ; but worthy lawyers will often go curious lengths to save worthless clients.

The national press, as Magee had said, had been paving the way for us by their comments on this case. That admirable "moral force" organ, the *Firebrand*, which was always devoted to my interests, strongly condemned outrages of every description, and "distinctly repudiated" all sympathy with criminal methods; but at the same time it took care to rake up all the stock grievances, past misgovernment, Cromwellian cruelty, landlord oppression, the alien Church establishment, etc., etc., and then asked was it to be wondered at, after all, if the Irish peasantry, goaded to madness and despair, sometimes sought for redress in "the wild justice of revenge"? The logical connection between high politics and the alleged low ruffianism of my clients may not appear quite clear to the reader; but it was very well understood by the inhabitants of K——. The *Firebrand* was read by everybody there who could read—a very small percentage indeed; but these superior persons had a habit of collecting around them the untaught village swains, and reading the national papers aloud for them slowly, laboriously, and skipping most of the hard words. These worthies put their own interpretation upon such editorial utterances as the above; and doubtless thought much less of the equivocal advocacy of protection for life and property than of the animated apologies for the unfortunate men awaiting trial.

As for myself, the *Firebrand* expressed in flattering terms its joy that the eloquent member for Gulgriena had been specially retained for these men. So far so good;—but

other and more dangerous papers had penetrated even to the wilds of K——. Fierce revolutionary organs were springing up like mushrooms ; and as a sincere O'Connellite and constitutional agitator, I was naturally doomed to find my bitterest enemies amongst these. The *Growler*, the *Vampire*, the *National Earthquake*, and the *Tornado of Erin*, all took up their parables against me as one newspaper. Monstrous as was the audacity of Iscariot Westropp, they confessed they wondered how he could dare to show his craven front among the freeborn men of K——. Better, far better, for the unhappy men now pining in dungeons under Saxon tyranny to await their inevitable doom from the hired judge of the oppressor, than to owe their deliverance to any wretched rodomontade bellowed by such a creature as this. Why could not the recreant content himself with cringing to the aristocracy of London, for the sake of the balls and dinners that always reward treason to the cause of Ireland? Why must he come, like an ill-omened bird, to blight the land of Sarsfield and Emmet with his baleful presence?—With similiar amenities, to the very verge of the Billingsgate vocabulary.

All this, of course, was highly flattering, as it is better for a public man to be well abused than even well praised. But just now such animadversions might prove inconvenient. Though I had suffered so severely at the hands of certain Orangemen in the Rotunda, I had never yet experienced any ill-treatment (except on paper) from the “National” party, whether labelled old or young ; but I

had read history, and I knew that Henry Grattan had been mobbed in Dublin, and Walter Scott hissed in Edinburgh, and why should not Jack Westropp's turn come for rough usage from the many-headed? Before leaving Dublin for K——, I had fortunately been able to secure five minutes' conversation with Mr. O'Connell.

"I think, sir," said I, "that a line from you would have great effect among these misguided people."

"And you shall have it with a heart and a half." He took a sheet of note-paper, and immediately wrote in his firm bold hand,—

"MY DEAR WESTROPP,—I have read some violent attacks on you, but I don't attach the slightest importance to them. I believe you to be as true as steel. In haste.

"Always sincerely yours,

"DANIEL O'CONNELL."

"If you are as true as Tom Steele, you will do at all events," said he, laughing. "I only wish I had a few more Protestants like you both."

Poor Dan! Amidst his engrossing national cares, that giant of politics always had his joke, and better still his act of kindness for a friend. I sighed to think that his magnificent frame bore traces of decay, and that his powers of mind and body were falling off very much from what I had remembered them two years before.

"For, though his eyes were waxing dim,
And though his foes spoke ill of him,
He was a friend to me."

On the morning of the trial, Magee and I rose early, and were on our way to the house of the parish priest, with whom we and Malachi were to breakfast, when we perceived two or three hundred of the great unwashed coming towards us, surging like the billows of an angry ocean. I used to consider it great fun to lash the sovereign Demos into rage against that imaginary impersonation, the Saxon oppressor, whose bones they could not break, but I found it by no means so pleasant to become the object of their delicate attentions myself. Unpleasant cries of—"Begorra, that's him!" "What brings him here?" "Send him back to the Castle," and unsavoury comparisons between myself and "Jemmy O'Brien," saluted my ear on all sides. Crowds are seldom long content with mere verbal demonstrations, and I very soon became the target whereat numerous dead cats, rotten eggs, and earthen clods were pelted. I was not an Amadis de Gaul, nor a Horatius Cocles, to oppose myself singly to a host; and as my assailants met all my attempts to procure a hearing with wild roars and acts of increasing violence, and were in nowise touched by the air of heroism with which I folded my arms and smiled contemptuously on them, it seemed highly probable that I should speedily exchange the *rôle* of the patriot for that of the martyr. Magee, however, whose presence of mind was beyond all praise, had vanished at the first threatening indications, and gone in search—not of the constabulary, as my innocent law-abiding English reader might imagine, for he knew well that their aid would most likely lead to twenty or thirty

heads being broken in the vain attempt to save one—but of an authority much more dreaded and respected by an Irish mob, namely, our friend the parish priest.

My clothes were soiled and besmeared, my coat torn, my hat battered, and I was on the point of falling a victim to superior numbers, when Father O'Looney, armed with a thick stick and the terrors of the Church, came hurriedly up, accompanied by Magee and Malachi Fitzsimon.

"What's all this about?" he cried angrily, rushing in among them.

They fell back as disconcerted as a set of schoolboys at the appearance of the master, and now seemed to think only of acting on the defensive.

"Oughtn't ye to be ashamed of yourselves, when those gentlemen have come all the way from Dublin city to fight your battles? Do you want to get the three boys hanged?"—alluding to my clients.

"Ah! don't be too hard on them," said I. "They were only in fun."

"He's a thractor, yer reverence," one of the bolder spirits ventured to assert.

"He sowld the pass," cried another.

"He's in the pay of the English," said a third. "I seen it in prent."

"Mick Doolan, you're a pretty gommock," said the priest, catching the last speaker by the collar, giving him a violent shake, and looking as if it was with difficulty he refrained from belabouring the trembling culprit with his stick. "The

half of ye know as much of what you're talking about as my grandmother's cat, and it would serve you right if these gentlemen went back to town in a pucker, and let the boys 'travel' *Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis.*"

"*Quare fremuerunt gentes?*" cried Malachi.

"*Sorvitque animis ignobile vulgus,*" exclaimed Magee ; while I wound up by calling out in stentorian tones—" *Quocunque jeceris stabit. Sic me servavit Apollo.*"

There was no resisting these mystical incantations from the Church and the law, and in a scene where the reading of the Riot Act by a magistrate would probably have led to bloodshed on an extensive scale, tranquillity was quickly restored. Availing myself of the altered state of affairs, I took Mr. O'Connell's letter out of my pocket.

"I thank your reverence," said I. "Perhaps your friends here, who won't listen to anything I say, would have no objection to hear the opinion of the Liberator?"

Loud cheers for the Liberator resounded on every side. I read aloud his certificate of character, and then simply asked the crowd—

"Will you think more of the opinion of unknown scribblers in newspapers than of the man who has been fighting your battles for half a century?"

The answer to this question was so enthusiastic that I saw the battle was more than won ; and getting on an adjacent stile, I harangued the "Men of Ireland" to their hearts' content : I ran through the whole gamut of praise, extolling the beauties of our native land, the fertility of her

valleys and the greenness of her hills, the heroism of her sons and the virtue of her daughters. I expressed, amidst loud cheers, my opinion that O'Connell was the greatest man the world had seen since the days of Nebuchadnezzar and Polyphemus. I said that those three heroes now pining in a felon's cell were prepared to go into exile—ay, if need be, to march sternly to the scaffold—for the sake of Ireland ; but I believed there was justice in heaven, and I hoped that the verdict of an intelligent jury would send them home in triumph to the bosom of their families, to the altar of their household gods, to the paradise of their homes.

A good musician always likes to perform on a first-class instrument, and, fresh as I was from all my parliamentary platitudes, I keenly enjoyed practising on the intense stolidity of a K—— mob. It reminded me so of old times ! My friends, too, knowing that popular sympathy was our trump card, listened, amused and smiling, while I was fulminating nonsense to those soapless shouters. Time pressed, however. It was nine o'clock, and we had much to do, so I felt much relieved when the hospitable priest interrupted me, saying—

“ I'm sorry to cut your eloquence short, Mr. Westropp, but the eggs and ham are waiting, and I'd recommend you and your friends to look sharp. You have a hard day's work before you, gentlemen, and if you don't lay in the foundation of a good breakfast, I am afraid justice won't be done for Ireland.”

CHAPTER XII.

THE HUMAN FOX-HUNT.

I HAVE always admired the beneficence of a paternal legislature in establishing courts of justice for the enlightenment and recreation of the multitude. In Ireland especially, where places of public amusement are unfortunately so rare this source of diversion is all the more welcome. As, amidst "the clamour much of men and dogs," high-born knights and dames press gaily to the hunting field, and risk their precious necks in pursuit of that noxious vermin the fox, prime terror of the poultry yard ; even so does the pursuit of that still more noxious human animal, the alleged criminal, bring together in court a grand array—the formidable chief justice, endowed with four or five thousand a year for acting as master of the ceremonies—the jurors, who co-operate so heartily with his lordship for the mere fun of the thing, and are supposed to scorn payment altogether—the grim band of Crown lawyers, bent on following the human fox through all his windings—the equally resolute counsel for the defence, cunning in providing loopholes of escape for the poor wretch—and the audience of this great

drama, the teeming multitudes, innocent of ablutions, who gladly avail themselves of the rare entertainment so gratuitously provided for them.

Yes—though a trifle unsavoury to a man fresh from the clubs and drawing-rooms of London, it was certainly a most animating scene, and I soon perceived that no one present excited such a keen interest in that closely packed crowd as myself, stage whispers of “Where’s Westropp?” and “That’s him” often distinctly reaching me. To this result my somewhat equivocal reputation mainly contributed. There is nothing so delightful to an Irish mob as tales of hairbreadth escapes from the imminent deadly bailiff or sheriff’s officer. Exaggerating rumour had credited me with even more wonderful escapes of this sort than any I have commemorated. I was a trusted lieutenant of the *Liberator*, too, and somewhat of a parliamentary celebrity, while my exploits of that very morning must have served to deepen the general interest and curiosity concerning me.

It is certainly not from vanity that I record that obviously mistaken admiration of the multitude. If I entertained any such feeling just then, it would have speedily vanished at the contemplation of the stern task before me, and at the presence of skilled antagonists, eager to watch for my halting. The chief justice, indeed, might gently correct the mistakes of a novice not unknown to fame, and even the solicitor-general might deal tenderly with me, if only from the consciousness of the strength of his own case; but Abel

Brunker, Q.C., was known never to give quarter, and as Magee and I must be driven to the poor expedient of vilifying the Crown witnesses, we might naturally expect to find all the tiger in that consummate advocate's nature thoroughly aroused. He shook hands with me cordially indeed, and his "How are you Westropp? Glad to find your friends have not torn you to pieces," though somewhat ironical, sounded rather friendly; but I knew the man. His shake-hands was that of the prize-fighter who is about to pummel his victim into a mummy. To be "torn to pieces" by an Irish mob, as we have seen, was only child's play after all; but what Father O'Looney could rescue me from the iron gripe of a Brunker?

Our opponents were probably over confident in the strength of a case which it seemed impossible to shake. Expecting an easy victory, therefore, they did not pay sufficient attention in advance to the composition of the jury, which, owing to circumstances already mentioned by Malachi Fitzsimon, had to be chosen altogether from the farming class. The Crown exercised their right to bid several of the good men and true "stand aside"; but so confident were Magee and I in the integrity of the men of K——, that we did not in a single instance challenge one of the array,—a touching proof of trustfulness which increased, if that were possible, the strength of the popular sympathy in our favour. The jury was quickly formed, and after a few words from junior counsel, the solicitor-general opened the case.

The learned gentleman spoke for only half an hour, but in that time he made a lucid and masterly statement against the prisoners, contriving to pile up the history of their achievements with such damaging effect that had I not read undisguised contempt and disgust, or, at the least, blank stolidity, palpably written in the ingenuous faces of the twelve jurors, I should certainly have given up the case for lost. The first witness he called was sub-constable Peter Muldoon.

This man deposed that on a certain night in the preceding January he had found the prisoner Morty Moynihan heading a disorderly mob, armed with guns, flails, scythes, etc. Distinctly saw Moynihan fire at Mr. Pilkington's house. Moynihan's face was blackened. Was in terror of his life, and believed he would have been shot but for the coming up of five other policemen, before whom the rioters fled. Fortunately escaped without a scratch.

MR. MAGEE. I am delighted to hear it, Peter. Are you a teetotaller?

MULDOON. No, sir.

MR. MAGEE. I thought not. How many glasses of whisky had you taken at this time?

MULDOON. None at all;—that is—glasses. I might have taken two or three half ones (*laughter*).

MR. MAGEE. I daresay; but two halves are equal to a whole. It is an extraordinary thing that people sometimes get drunk on these half glasses of whisky. How many had you taken?

MULDOON. I disremember.

MR. MAGEE. Very likely. I suppose they were past counting (*laughter*). Was it a bright night?

MULDOON (*hesitating*). Only middling.

MR. MAGEE. I am afraid so. I see by this almanack that it was just before the new moon;—but no matter. The crowd ran away when your friends came up, and you made the arrest afterwards. How did you know Moynihan?

MULDOON. By his face, of course.

MR. MAGEE. Am I to understand that you knew him by his blackened face, in a dark night, surrounded by a crowd that had just been putting you in dread of your life? Come, Peter, do you expect us to swallow that?

MULDOON (*angrily*). Why, sure, didn't I know him when I caught him?

MR. MAGEE. Yes;—and we'll know *you* now that we have caught you (*laughter*). I am afraid you'd never have known him only for "the half ones" making you see double. I thought we should get something out of this witness, gentlemen. You may go down, Peter.

"Peter" did accordingly retire, covered with confusion. The brief cross-examination had been skilfully directed to raising vague doubts, and undermining whatever reputation for sobriety the witness might have had. I had aided its effect not a little by sundry stage tricks, such as smiling and nodding significantly to the jury, as who should say—
"It is manifestly impossible for gentlemen of your sagacity

to believe a single word falling from the lips of such an inveterate drunkard as this policeman."

The next witness was sub-constable Martin Condren, a fine-looking young man, on whom I had to try my prentice hand. He told a very plain tale in his direct examination. He had happened to be near Sir Hickman Kearney's house on the night after the transactions deposed to by Muldoon. Heard the steps and voices of several men behind a wall. Recognized one of the voices as that of the prisoner Mullarkey, who said—"Come on, boys, to Kearney's house. I had a shot at it last night." Hurried quickly away for the assistance of other constables, and on their coming up the band took to their heels, and Mullarkey only was captured. This very damaging evidence was to be corroborated by that of a maidservant of Sir Hickman's, who had distinctly identified Mullarkey before the magistrates as having been seen by her firing into her master's house. I was perhaps in a worse predicament than even that of Magee, as I could hope for nothing from cross-examination, unless by making baseless insinuations. I learned from Malachi that Condren was a man of excellent character, but that at present he was separated from his wife, a woman of vixenish temper, who had gone to live with her own people. On this hint I spoke.

MR. WESTROPP (*with a broad grin*). Somehow it is always in the evenings you nice young policemen happen to be prowling about, where there are pretty servant girls (*laughter*). You are a plucky sort of fellow?

CONDREN. I try to do my best.

MR. WESTROPP. But you commenced this great battle by running away?

CONDREN. Yes. There was a whole lot of them.

MR. WESTROPP. And you could not "surround" them all, I suppose? It would be a pity such a nice fellow should distress himself too much. I see you part your hair in the middle.

CONDREN. I don't wear a wig, anyway, counsellor (*laughter, and cries of "well hit" from the Crown counsel*).

MR. WESTROPP. I suppose you were philandering after this servant girl on the evening in question?

CONDREN. Certainly not.

MR. WESTROPP. Well, I beg your pardon, but I thought it looked a little suspicious. All the family out—a pretty servant girl in—and a policeman adjacent: but no matter. You are a married man?

CONDREN. Yes, sir.

MR. WESTROPP. Separated from your wife, I believe?

MR. BRUNKER, Q.C. Don't answer that question. What in the world has this to do with the case?

MR. WESTROPP. We shall see that by-and-by. I insist on the question being answered.

MR. BRUNKER. I appeal to your lordship not to allow such an outrageous interference with the sanctity of private life, which should be respected as much in the person of that humble man as in that of the inspector-general himself.

CHIEF JUSTICE. I presume you mean in some way to test the witness's credibility, Mr. Westropp, but I can't allow you to put such a question as this. The first men in England have been separated from their wives, and of course the fault of such separation may have rested just as often with the wife as the husband.

MR. WESTROPP. I bow at once to your lordship's decision, and shall not say a word more on this unhappy subject. Mr. Brunker was perfectly right in interfering to shield the witness.—Tell me, Mr. Condren, do you expect promotion for all these valuable labours of yours?

CONDREN. I might—or I mightn't.

MR. WESTROPP. A most satisfactory answer!—he might, or he mightn't; you will observe that, gentlemen. Now, sir, remember you are on your oath. By that awful responsibility, do you or do you not expect to be promoted for these services, if my unhappy clients are convicted?

CONDREN (*after considerable hesitation*). I might be—remembered.

MR. WESTROPP. Oh, you might!—nothing more likely. I'll remember you all the days of my life, I promise you.—What is the name of this pretty girl at Sir Hickman's?

CONDREN. Honor Bright.

MR. WESTROPP. Oh, Honor Bright, no less! (*roars of laughter*). Then in the name of "honor bright," my good fellow, you had better get out of that box.

Exit Condren, disconcerted and discredited. The moral mud I had pelted at him *had* stuck. The jurors were

fathers of families, and that single word "philandering" had worked wonders among them. I had taken them completely into my confidence, too, and had shown them by a series of nods, winks, frowns, and shrugs, my sense of the enormities which Mr. Bruncker found it necessary to cover with the decent veil of silence. That domineering lawyer, indeed, had overreached himself, and helped to play my game by interrupting me. Had he suffered me to continue my questions, the flimsiness of my attempts at hinting away the policeman's character must have speedily become apparent. As it was, I felt immensely relieved, and a cordial pressure of Malachi's hand, with the whisper "Capitally done," put me into great spirits.

The evidence of Constable Stephen Butler was absolutely conclusive against all the prisoners. He had headed the little party who had pursued and arrested Mullarky. He had detected Moynihan in the act of various outrages, to which he deposed with "damnable iteration," and had found on the person of O'Hea two threatening letters addressed to neighbouring landlords. It was no easy task to shake this witness, a steady, middle-aged man, of studious habits, and who had formerly been a "hedge schoolmaster," but Magee had a stone in his sling, and he marched smilingly even to this forlorn hope.

MR. MAGEE. I believe you are a very studious character, constable?

BUTLER. I hope so, sir.

MR. MAGEE. You *hope* so! Why, I was not speaking

in the future tense, my friend—but no matter (*laughter among the lawyers ; profound wisdom, as of owls, depicted on the faces of the jury*). You are acquainted with mathematics, I suppose ?

BUTLER. A little.

MR. MAGEE. Got as far as the Asses' Bridge, perhaps ?

BUTLER. Oh yes, and far beyond it.

Here several of the jury interfered to inquire where the Asses' Bridge was situated, as they did not know of any such structure in the whole county.

BUTLER. It's a term in Euclid. I could not make you understand it.

The jurors looked particularly grave on this announcement, and were evidently highly disgusted with the witness's impudence and presumption.

CHIEF JUSTICE. Please confine yourself to the evidence, Mr. Magee.

MR. MAGEE. Yes, my lord ; I am coming to it.—You swear you found two threatening letters in O'Hea's pocket on the night of the arrest ; now can you tell me what constable put them there ?

BUTLER. None.

MR. MAGEE. What, none ! Then perhaps it was a sub-constable ?

BUTLER. No, sir.

MR. MAGEE. You swear that ;—now could you see everything that all the policemen in the guard-room were doing ?

BUTLER. Well, I think so.

MR. MAGEE. Oh, we don't want any of your thoughts, though you *are* such a scholar; we shall soon see what your thoughts are worth.—How many policemen were present?

BUTLER. About twenty.

MR. MAGEE. I see. Were any of them smoking?

BUTLER. Yes—three or four.

MR. MAGEE. And you expect that enlightened jury to believe that in a crowded and excited guard-room, filled with smoke, you could see everything that every individual constable was doing?

BUTLER. I think I could.

MR. MAGEE. Thinking again! His lordship will tell you that we must have facts, not thoughts. Now, if I produce an independent witness to swear that he saw a constable putting these two letters into O'Hea's pocket, will that man be guilty of perjury?

BUTLER. Well, I would not like to go the length of swearing that.

MR. MAGEE. I am glad to find there are some bounds to your swearing.—Now look that intelligent jury in the face, and just answer me one question:—don't you know perfectly well, with your Euclid and your Asses' Bridge, you would have been burned for a witch if you had lived two or three hundred years ago?

BUTLER. A wizard, you mean, Mr. Magee.

MR. MAGEE. Come, sir, do you mean to say that is any answer to my question?

BUTLER. I think it quite a good enough answer.

MR. MAGEE. You do! You hear that, gentlemen.— Well, sir, you may thank God you are not living in the reign of James the First! I have nothing more to ask you.

A great deal of latitude has of course to be allowed to barristers in the discharge of their often desperate duties, and though this irrelevant jocosity called forth from the all-important Brunker, who was nothing if not dignified, a contemptuous exclamation of "Buffoonery!" it was really felt on all sides as a relief to the dryness of the proceedings, which I have attempted to diversify by picking out some of the tit-bits. Magee, however, whose tact never failed him, would have been the last man to resort to such frivolity before a Dublin jury. In K—— it was different. "Circumstances alter cases"—and the mode of conducting them.

Honor Bright and two or three witnesses of minor importance were then examined for the Crown. My success with Condren had familiarized me with so novel an arena, and I lost no opportunity of eliciting laughter at the expense of these witnesses. One thick-headed constable, for instance, having been asked if he identified Moynihan, said that he was so busy "exorcising" that night that he could not be quite sure,—which drew from me the very natural remark that, whatever the faults of my clients might be, it was scarcely fair to represent them as evil spirits.

Two o'clock had now arrived, and the awful master of

the ceremonies having briefly intimated his gracious intention to lunch, the principal performers in this human fox-hunt withdrew for a brief period to refresh the inner man. Apprehending that the reader may also stand in need of such refreshment as is to be obtained by a pause in the perusal of my memoirs, I too shall exercise my sovereign prerogative by adjourning for a while.

CHAPTER XIII.

CRIMINAL LAWYERS AND GUILTLESS CLIENTS.—REMARK- ABLE REPORT OF MY PERORATION.

ON the reassembling of the court Magee rose to state the case for the prisoners, which he did in a speech so able and ingenious, considering the difficult position he was placed in, that I cannot refrain from giving a summary of its principal points. He said that several overt acts inculcating his clients had, no doubt, been very glibly deposed to, but by whom? By constables of whom he would venture to say that not one of them came into court with clean hands. He would not like to say anything unnecessarily harsh of these unfortunate men; but what had they themselves admitted? Peter Muldoon—a jolly sort of fellow enough, probably—had primed himself with “half ones” till he had lost his count (*laughter*), and then, in a dark January night, had contrived to identify Moynihan as the leader of a disorderly mob, and as shooting at Mr. Pilkington’s house—Moynihan’s face being deliberately blackened at the time! Would they convict a man of stealing a pocket handkerchief on such evidence as this, which had already subjected his

client to the horrors of a gaol for six weary months? Equally reckless was the swearing of that handsome young man with his hair parted in the middle (*laughter*)—Martin Condren. They justly prided themselves on their national superiority in the domestic virtues; and it had been with pain he had seen counsel on the other side using his undoubted privilege to seal Condren's tongue as to his family life—ay, even to prevent him admitting the simple fact whether he was separated from his wife or not. However, Condren and that pretty servant girl, Honor Bright, had been put upon the table, and had sworn hard against his client Mullarkey—Honor Bright that she identified him as having fired into her master's house, and Condren that he absolutely overheard him confessing his guilt to his accomplices! Gracious heavens! were villains and conspirators such fools as to make these confessions within earshot of young policemen, prowling about in the neighbourhood of pretty servant girls? The notion was too preposterous. Nothing whatever had been distinctly sworn against Mullarkey, except by this precious pair;—they would mark that well, and so would his lordship when he came to address them. Oh! but there was that luminary, Constable Butler, who was so ready to swear everything against everybody;—what weight would they attach to the evidence of this poor hare-brained creature? Had he not broken down completely on cross-examination? And yet on the evidence of such a man, his clients—simple, unlettered folks, who knew nothing of dark mysteries, and were neither witches nor wizards,

though a constable swore he had been "exorcising" among them (*laughter*), had been torn from their families, and thrust into a gaol for six months! He need not remind gentlemen of their intelligence that all these policemen had their own ends to serve in such prosecutions (or persecutions); that it was by them they were to obtain promotion, the favour of their official superiors, and the large rewards that government had offered for the suppression of Whiteboyism. It was not by tainted evidence of that sort he would seek to defend his clients. He would produce unexceptionable witnesses to refute every material fact that had been advanced. He would prove that on the night when poor Sub-constable Muldoon "saw double," Morty Moynihan, so far from firing at Mr. Pilkington's house, was going peaceably with two friends to attend the wake of a deceased neighbour, when he was taken into custody. It was true that when Condren gave the alarm, and the hue-and-cry was raised, Mullarkey was arrested not very far from Sir Hickman Kearney's house,—but under what circumstances? He had gone to bed unusually early that evening, feeling tired and unwell, but the outcry had roused him; he had jumped up and run out to see what was the matter, and being, from his illness and exhaustion, less able to run away than the really guilty parties, had been easily captured. A victim must be found somehow; and they all knew how hard Martin Condren and Honor Bright, supposing them to be intimate, would be likely to swear, to accomplish their ends. But the most shocking part of this case

was yet to come. The learned sergeant (*laughter*) swore that he had found two threatening letters on the person of O'Hea. Now what was the fact? Those who hide can find. A perfectly independent witness, who had nothing to hope for from government, would swear that after O'Hea was arrested he entered the guard-room, and there saw one of the police—he could not say which of them—put some pieces of paper into the prisoner's pocket, and these were manifestly the alarming documents in question (*sensation in the body of the court*). These were the principal matters to which he had to call their attention. He should make no appeal to their feelings or their passions. He was a plain man speaking to plain men. He would not rake up those records of past misgovernment which palliated, if they could not justify, the errors of Whiteboyism; nor would he attempt to wring their hearts by a description of the sufferings of his wretched clients during the past six months. His learned friend, Mr. Westropp, whose reputation for oratory was known far and wide, might undertake these things. His was a humbler task. He had, to the best of his abilities, exposed the monstrous attempts of the Crown to fasten guilt upon the three unfortunate men at the bar, and he now confidently left the issue in their hands.

After an address of an hour, every sentence of which told, Magee sat down amidst murmurs of applause through the highly agitated court. When I heard that applause, and watched the expression of satisfaction on the faces of the jury as Magee kept pounding at the various fortresses of

the Crown, I saw that, however terrific the mauling our witnesses might receive, we had little to fear. Malachi put forward two or three sturdy yeomen, who swore hard to substantiate some of the statements just made by counsel, and were of course very roughly handled on cross-examination. Our last and (if credited) most important witness speedily summoned the arch-enemy Bruncker prominently into action.

Manus Regan, a tall, powerfully built young man, with a ferocious expression of countenance, deposed very categorically to having seen a policeman, whom he could not identify, put some papers into O'Hea's trousers pocket after his arrest. A slight pause succeeded the direct examination of this worthy, and he seemed about to depart in peace from the table, when Mr. Bruncker, Q.C., rose, and opened a brief dialogue in the best possible temper.

MR. BRUNKER. I beg your pardon, my good friend. I have one or two questions to put to you, if you have no objection.

REGAN. Not the laste in life, your honour.

MR. BRUNKER. Very good. How often have you been before the magistrates?

REGAN (*with an expression of blank stupidity*). Is it how often I was up foreninst the magisthrates?

MR. BRUNKER. Precisely.

REGAN (*scratching his head, and looking puzzled*). Why then, maybe wonst or twicet, your honour—in the regard of dhrink.

MR. BRUNKER. Oh, but that's a good man's case. Anything more serious?

REGAN (*hesitating*). Maybe.

MR. BRUNKER. How often for faction fights?

REGAN. Faix it's hard to say, sir. I was sometimes took in the wrong.

MR. BRUNKER. I suppose so. Well, there's something manly about that, at all events. How often for cattle stealing?

REGAN. Oh, counsellor, you expect a poor man to have a wondherful memory, like yourself, and the other honourable gentlemen. You might give me a chance!

MR. BRUNKER. I will;—I'll give you a chance of telling more truth than you have told this twelvemonth (*laughter*). Doesn't all the county know that you helped yourself to a sheep of Mr. O'Reilly's, and were given free lodgings for it?

Regan nodded an unwilling assent.

MR. BRUNKER. There was a horse of Colonel Stanley's, too, that you made some mistake about, wasn't there?

REGAN (*doggedly*). Oh, yes;—I suppose there was a horse.

MR. BRUNKER. That you got eighteen months for taking? (*no answer*). You see I have been favoured with a fuller account of your prowess than my learned friends opposite.—Well, if you don't like the subject, we'll change it. You are a Ribbonman?

REGAN. Who told you that?

MR. BRUNKER. No matter. Are you one?

REGAN (*changing colour*). No, sir.

MR. BRUNKER. No!—you surprise me. Then you must have given it up within the last week? (*no answer*). If I put three men in that box to swear you are a prominent member of the same Ribbon lodge with them, will they be all perjuring themselves?

REGAN (*looking down*). They'd not dare to swear it.

MR. BRUNKER. Oh, wouldn't they? Some people dare to swear strange things. But you don't deny it, all the same? (*no answer*). I am in no hurry. I can wait till you have made up your mind. Still silent?—Well, now, answer me one question, that won't tax your memory much—who invented all this story for you?

REGAN (*sullenly*). What story?

MR. BRUNKER. *What* story! Why, surely you don't forget it already? All this rubbish you have been swearing about seeing a policeman put papers into O'Hea's pocket—who invented that for you?

REGAN. No one.

MR. BRUNKER. No one! And do you mean to say that that thick head of yours could invent such a story of itself?—Come, sir, don't hang your head that way. Look up at the jury, if you *can* look twelve honest men in the face, after coming from your foul dens of assassination and sedition! Is there one word of truth in what you have sworn about these papers?

REGAN (*faintly*). I seen the polisman puttin' them in.

MR. BRUNKER. He was a bright fellow to do it while you were looking on! I'd advise him to take some lessons from you in hidden villainy. Tell me—Mr. Magee described you as an independent witness, who had “nothing to hope for from government”;—is that description true?

REGAN. Divil a word of lie in it.

MR. BRUNKER. I believe you at last (*laughter*); but take care they don't give you a rope when you least hope for it. Be off out of that!

It is impossible to convey on paper the effect of such a cross-examination as this, or to do justice to the consummate ability with which Brunker rapidly dealt blow after blow, varying his voice and manner at will, from the easy jocularly of the opening to the bitter contempt of the close. It filled me with pretty much the same sensations as I might have felt if looking at a tiger tearing a sheep to pieces. Though not given to preaching, I may improve the occasion by a word in passing to my friends the legal tigers. By all means tear your Manus Regans to pieces when you can get them. They are fitting game for you, and society is benefited by their laceration. But spare, oh spare the gentleness of the bashful, the nervousness of the timid, the shrinking delicacy of woman, the grey hairs of age! You little know what protracted agonies you have often caused by a momentary flourish of the forensic tomahawk. The time may come when you yourself shall be *put to the question*. Take heed, then, that your consciences be not burdened with unnecessary and outrageous massacres of the innocents!

By the time all the witnesses were examined it was near five o'clock, and the court was adjourned till the next morning. I was very glad of this postponement, as it gave me time to mature my speech for the defence, which I did in the course of a long and solitary country walk that evening.

The reader, however, has heard quite as much of this great case as he is likely to relish, and I resist the temptation of giving even a synopsis of the principal arguments I advanced in my speech next day. Those who are curious in the matter are referred to the collected volume of my "Addresses and Orations," published by Outis, Nemo & Co., for a full report. Suffice it to say here that my speech, which occupied two hours and a half in the delivery, was received with enthusiasm throughout. Unlike Magee, I resorted to those occasional bursts of poetry and flights of rhetoric which long practice had made so familiar to me, and which I had often chafed at being unable to display before the unsympathizing audience of the House of Commons. The mass of my hearers detected "veiled rebellion" in those flights, and that was enough to elicit cheers which the chief justice had more than once to suppress. Emboldened by this favourable reception, I waxed warmer and more vehement, and at last wound up with an impassioned peroration, which caused tumultuous cheering throughout the court. The reader will soon find a few fragments of this harangue reproduced. Whatever may be thought of its power by cold and correct critics,

it answered its immediate purpose fully, for though Bruncker poured forth all the torrents of his *splendida bilis* on me and my cause, and though the chief justice charged dead against the prisoners, the jury, without turning in their box, brought in a verdict of acquittal.

"What!" cried the chief justice, in amazement, "do I hear you aright? Do you mean to say that you consider all these men not guilty of the crimes so clearly and convincingly brought home to them?"

"Yes, my lord," replied the foreman, with admirable coolness.

"I beg you to think further, gentlemen. Recollect that this is a case of the highest importance to the public peace, and indeed I may say to the very foundation of all order in society. Surely in such a case it would be becoming in you not to bring in a verdict so directly opposed to the overwhelming weight of evidence?"

But his lordship had to deal with "constitutional" jurymen, who knew their powers, and were not to be dictated to nor lectured from the bench.

"All the same, my lord, our minds are made up. We find that the prisoners at the bar are *not guilty*."

A mighty shout now rang through the court, and was rapidly caught up and re-echoed by the crowd outside, who had not been fortunate enough to gain admission. When something like silence was obtained, one of the jurors, whom I afterwards found to be a near relation of the prisoner Moynihan, capped the climax by observing—

"Yes, my lord, and we wish to say, too, that them three presoners at the bar laves this coort without the shadow of a stain on their carekthers."

"They must certainly leave this court, since you are pleased to will it so," said the bewildered judge. "All I can say is, I hope I may never have to preside in K—— again."

"So much for eloquence," said the solicitor-general, good-naturedly leaning across the table to shake hands with me.

"So much for national newspapers and a K—— jury," said the indignant Brunker, with such an expression on his haughty countenance as might be worn by one of the lions in the Zoo, before whom one had just dangled a few tempting pounds of steak, only to withdraw them as the noble animal was proceeding to the act of mastication.

I have always found that the man who roared the loudest was made the most of by my countrymen; and while Magee's sound arguments and dexterous logic were ignored by the multitude who thronged the court-house, my inflammatory appeals to their passions made me at once the hero of the hour. This might be very fascinating to a novice; but I had long since learned to look with contempt on such hero-worship as a place like K—— could supply, and amidst the coarse festivities that I had to endure that evening, my mind was mainly engrossed by the effect to be produced on the empire by the full report of my speech in next day's *Firebrand*. It was specially

arranged that it should appear verbatim, with which view three reporters, relieving each other in turn, were present to catch my words upon the wing. That there should be no mistake whatever, I deliberately dictated to one of them the concluding sentences, framed and moulded into shape the night before on my restless pillow, with which I had so hurried away the jury and the multitude.

Alas ! what human foresight can guard against distressing contingencies? Nothing could be better than the report, which I proceeded greedily to devour next morning, until the real "part of Hamlet"—the peroration—appeared ; and then, to my utter dismay, I found that a blundering printer had mixed up my soul-thrilling sentences with the commercial review of the week, the result being the following inconceivably absurd specimen of "printer's pie :"—

"But, gentlemen, do I despair? No ! I see in the clear vista of the future 927 packages of sugar candy imported from Antwerp. Rum is very dull, and the demand for Fow-chow congous is not improving, but as long as the bright flame of patriotism burns upon the altar of oil and tallow, imported from Bordeaux, per the *Petropaulovski*, so long do I hope for freedom for this down-trodden country. My heart, gentlemen, has been deeply wrung by the hostile and menacing tightness of the money market, yarns curtailed, pig iron steady, very little doing in bleaching powder ;—but the destinies of a nation are not to be decided by arbitrary interference with hemp and jute, imported 750 bales, with

an easier tone generally. No, gentlemen—look into your own breasts, and there you will find, stamped by nature's hand, common kinds of brown sugar, firm and unaltered, in spite of the recent depression of the markets. It is idle to tell me that we are free, that tanning materials are scarce, and leather and hides flat. I tell you, gentlemen—ay, and I tell our imperial oppressors in my boldest and most fearless tones—that the day will come when Limerick middles and gams have advanced ; butter has been in good demand ; mutton slow, but firm ; and I hope ere long to see the Parliament that was wrested from us by the perfidy of Pitt restored in all the splendour of crushed lump, at an advance of threepence to sixpence on the lower and medium qualities.

“ Here the learned gentleman resumed his seat amidst tremendous cheers, clapping of hands, and waving of 150 tons of prime guano.”

Oh, horror !—here was I made the laughing-stock of the whole empire. I tore the wretched paper to pieces, and trampled it under my feet. I had a vague apprehension that some one on the staff of the *Firebrand* had wilfully played me false, and I rushed forth to consult Magee, Fitzsimon, and Father O'Looney about this monstrous outrage. Alas ! I found them all roaring with laughter, and so contagious is mirth that, when I procured another copy of the paper and read the obnoxious passages over again, I had to join in the chorus of cachinnation at my own expense.

Next day's issue of the *Firebrand* contained a satisfactory

explanation of the mistake, and a correct report of the peroration, printed in wide type, and accompanied by most flattering comments ; but meanwhile the mischief had been done. The absurd passages were copied not only into the obscure columns of the *Growler*, *Grievance-Monger*, etc., but into my old friend St. George's highly respectable journal the *Retriever*, whence they quickly found their way into the English papers. The *Times* and *Morning Post* sneeringly commended the last improvement in Irish eloquence. It was suggested in one quarter that the extraordinary mildness of the jury was probably owing to the prisoners' counsel having promised them a rare feast of pie ;—and even my old friend Terry Driscoll, the Momus of the Dublin *Warder*, whom I had so often crammed with facetiæ for his weekly letter, had his good-humoured fling at “the quare young gentleman that got the boys off. More power to his elbow !—and it must be no joke of an elbow, ayther, that made the people in coort wave a hundred and fifty tons of guano, be the same more or less. If 'tis a thing he'd like to hear that gossoon of mine sing, ‘Thady, you Gandher,’ or ‘The night before Larry was stretched,’ with all the new variations, over a screechin' gaulioge of punch, there's not a man in Ireland the missis and myself 'ud be prouder to see undher our mahogany. So here's to Counsellor Westropp's health, and long life to him ! There's nothin' like the ould stock afther all. When I'm mimber for Bohernabreena or Mud Island, maybe I'll not be throwin' off some mighty fine sentiments before him as Spaker in

College Green, showin' how to improve things in general by puttin' down taxation on sperits, and doin' away with the polis; and if he never dies till I hire a man to kill him, all I can say is, he'll bate Methuselah to chalk-stones."

CHAPTER XIV.

WONDERFUL PHENOMENON PRODUCED BY THE AIR OF KILLINEY.

MUCH as this printer's blunder annoyed me, I believe it really acted as a good advertisement for me, by directing attention to me in innumerable circles where little desire to read speeches, ornate or otherwise, existed. I had fared so well in the Whiteboy case that, if I had only known a little law, my whole future career might have been completely altered. Even without knowing any law, however, and trusting solely to native impudence, and that knowledge of the practice of courts which men accustomed to reporting so rapidly pick up, I had done battle with the solicitor-general in person, and bearded and beaten the Brunker in his den. All cases, of course, were not Whiteboy cases, and all juries were not K—— juries. More was the pity! But my old friend Malachi now gladly recognized in me the materials of a good "criminal lawyer," as the somewhat questionable phrase goes; and he had no hesitation in retaining me in an important murder case, to be tried in another assize town in the following week,

I was fortunately enabled to spend four or five days in Dublin before undertaking this onerous duty, and I had reason to regret that the time was so short. Many strong ties bound me to the capital just now. Independent of the delight I always felt in the society of Maud Etchingham, my mother and the Lofthouses had just arrived in Dublin, and taken apartments for a fortnight in Hayes's hotel at Kingstown previous to starting for the Continent. I had not seen any of them since Kate's marriage, and I grudged every day that I was debarred from the company of my mother and my sister during their brief sojourn in Kingstown. Mrs. Westropp, poor soul, was just as silly as ever. She congratulated me very heartily on my parliamentary success, and still more on having seen my name figuring in the dinner list of certain distinguished Whig noblemen.

"These are the right sort of men to know," she said. "There are a set of upstarts forcing their way into society just now, who are *mauvais ton*. Such men, for instance, as Cobden and Bright—"

"And don't you honour Bright, mother?"

"Hush, Jack! There's nothing so vulgar as punning:—you never hear *me* pun. Then there's Hudson, that railway king, as they call him—who was his father, I wonder? And Sir Robert Peel, a clever man, no doubt."

"Rather!"

"But look at his family! I'm almost happy he has not taken you up."

"I wish to heaven he had ! You know I was never taken up by anybody yet but bailiffs and policemen."

These differences of opinion between us were of old standing ; and I might as well think of washing the spots off the leopard as of imparting the slightest glimmering of common sense to the poor dear mother, when questions of lineage were concerned.

I felt some uneasiness in my first meeting with Captain Etchingham, after the correspondence in which I had declined acceding to his pressing request for parliamentary action, and was greatly relieved when he accosted me in the best temper.

"I see you were quite right, Westropp," said he, "in putting off the impeachment till the Free Trade question is settled. It was a capital idea."

"I am very glad you think so."

"Yes—the public will have time then to attend to the whole case—to study it, word by word. By George, what a speech I expect you to make !"

"But, my dear sir, you will please recollect what I said in my letter."

"So I do—every word of it."

"That I thought this was a case for experienced counsel."

"Of course it is—and what are you ? Why, it was only last week you spoke for two hours and a half for three of the greatest ruffians under the sun ;—ay, and got them off too ! Experienced counsel, indeed ! You have only to

work as hard and as long showing up the rascality of my brother and the judges, and the property is sure to be mine. I hope I'm not a complete fool."

"I hope not."

"Well, then, don't you see a good open discussion in Parliament is really the only thing left me? I thought I could do something with the *Times* newspaper. I wrote them an enormous letter last month, exposing the whole villainy—as beautiful a letter as ever you read—it would have filled three columns; and I wound up by giving my real name, and telling them I was a Waterloo man, and had bled for my king and country. And what do you think, sir? They never printed a word of it!"

"Too bad. Perhaps it miscarried."

"Not a bit, for I wrote a week afterwards reminding them of it. And yet people talk of newspapers being the guardians of public liberty, and such rubbish! It's enough to drive a man mad."

I only thought that result had been achieved very satisfactorily already.

One memorable day we had arranged to dine with the Lofthouses at Kingstown at seven o'clock. Lofthouse himself was boating and fishing with some friends at Dalkey; and about noon my mother, the Etchingshams, and I started by car for Killiney, where we purposed enjoying a few hours before dinner. After the months I had passed amidst the roar of the mighty city, there was something inexpressibly soothing and exhilarating in revisiting once

more those glorious hills by which Dublin is bounded ; and as I was seated beside Maud, leaving my mother and the captain *tête-à-tête* on the other side, I was at liberty to indulge in whatever rhapsodies or raptures the scenery and circumstances might suggest, without any absurd interruptions from a couple on whom age had certainly not conferred much wisdom.

As for Killiney itself, what words from my pen could do justice to the charms of this delicious spot ? Since the time I treat of, indeed, some of its sweetest walks have been ruthlessly cut off from the public, and many of its noblest views sacrilegiously intercepted ; but we must be thankful for small mercies to the mutilators of nature, and even what is left of Killiney presents the weary Dublinian with scenery which, however hackneyed, seems always new. " Age cannot wither, nor custom stale its infinite variety." The velvet sward, gradually rising to a considerable height, and disclosing at every step some fresh panorama of increasing loveliness—the brilliant purple heath—the lonely wooded walks, sacred to lovers and to poets—the ceaseless booming of the billows far below—the commanding view of the Hill of Howth, and of the Dublin and Wicklow mountains from the summit, terminating in the bold headland of Bray—

" And extending over all,
Old ocean's gray and melancholy waste "—

all this and infinitely more still exist, to smile at the selfish and senseless vandalism that has shut out so much of nature's glories. When revisited on a warm day in July, in

the society of one's dearest friends, the effect of such scenery on a jaded brain-worker may easily be imagined. Shortly after we reached the obelisk that crowns the hill, our opera-glasses enabled us to discern Lord Lofthouse in the distance, making towards us with a basket well laden with fish, and accompanied by Kate. On their joining us, we spread out on the sward the contents of a hamper, to which our long drive and the keen mountain air enabled us to render ample justice.

Luncheon over, we wandered our several ways in couples through the happy valley. Ah, it was very happy! Not, perhaps, that I should have felt particularly enraptured if the gallant captain, or my noble brother-in-law, or even my revered mother, had fallen to my lot. That might be all very well in drawing-rooms, and clubs, and theatres, and crowded streets, but in the groves of the Dargle, or on the slopes of Killiney—ah, there we want something more exquisite still!

And that something I had got. I felt that I loved Maud more than ever, in a scene so lovely. It was her first visit to Killiney; and as each new step disclosed fresh beauties, she could scarcely speak her delight. But after all, what was there so beautiful, even there, as herself? Reader, who knowest not this paradise in miniature, learn from an old stager that in many places it is perilously trying to weak knees, and thou must expect thy fair companion to come tumbling at times into thy arms, in a manner seriously calculated to disturb thy equilibrium. But these very

accidents are perhaps the pleasantest part of the proceedings. Nobody is ever killed by them ; no bones are broken ; and if damage is inflicted on susceptible hearts, it is possible for the parson in due time to repair it, without any necessity of calling in the aid of the surgeon.

After a descent of two or three hundred feet Maud and I reached a coign of vantage, where the views above and below were equally glorious, and where, stretching ourselves at full length, we indulged in much-needed rest, and much idle conversation. I have always held that the dialogue of lovers is the most foolish thing in the world—to report ; I certainly make no exception in my own favour, and I shall only say that my billings and cooings may be, in the words of the novelists, “ more easily imagined than described.”

These things, of course, are very foolish ; but Maud Etchingham was far from being a foolish girl. Even in the little I have written about her, I have done something like justice to her wisdom. Thoughtfulness and solidity of character, indeed, had been forced upon her by her continual residence with a hare-brained father, and were rendered not less necessary by her engagement with such a very peculiar personage as myself. Strange as it may seem, we great public men, the salt of the earth, about whom powerful parties and influential newspapers are eagerly contending, are often very foolish persons indeed, compared with our sweethearts and our wives, of whom nobody hears anything !

The murmurs of the waves far below suggested the wondrous power of oratory on an excited people. That led naturally enough to my recent display at K——. Maud praised it very highly ; and I knew from that praise that something of a lecture was coming.

“Some persons,” said I, “whose opinions differ from yours, hold that the best part of my speech was the peroration—as reported, with variations, in the *Firebrand*.”

Maud laughed. “You will have your joke. I was mad when I read that nonsense. I don’t think you could have been so vexed yourself ; but the real peroration—how I should have liked to have heard it ! ”

“And you shall hear it.” And then, with my right arm encircling the jury, and the hoarse waves below representing the applause of the freeborn men of K——, I vociferated once more that passionate appeal for “justice” which the reader has seen so miserably mangled. The mountain bees wondered at the noise I was making, and lazily hummed their approbation.

“It is very fine,” said Maud, “and I don’t wonder that you had such success. And now that you are likely to do so well at the bar, you must promise me once for all to give up this foolish agitation for Repeal.”

“What, dearest ! Would you ask Bonaparte to give up fighting, immediately after Lodi or Marengo ? ”

“Certainly—if I thought it should only lead him to Waterloo. I did not like to press you too closely before ; but now you really seem on the road to success in your own profession.”

"That is to say, I was engaged in one case last week through the charity of an old friend, and the same man has retained me for another next week."

"But has not every barrister to face great difficulties in the beginning? Look at the publicity you have gained now—the fame, I may call it. What an advertisement that Whiteboy case has been for you!"

"Yes, love;—but if I hang my new client through some gross blunder, the advertisement won't be so valuable. I can't hope to repeat the success of K—— often. A gambler might as well expect to cut aces or throw sixes every time he played."

She was silent and thoughtful for a while, and then continued in a still more serious tone,—

"Of course you make plenty of money out of this agitation—though you have never explained, even to me, *how*."

"Oh, Maud!"—I winced. Could I tell even her the infinite variety of ways in which Egyptians must be despoiled? I replied, somewhat evasively—"I owe it to Mr. O'Connell that I am not at this moment an obscure newspaper reporter. And even a terrible Tory like you admire that great man, under whose banner I am fighting."

"I do admire him highly," she replied with the same provoking calmness. "But if he really believes in this Repeal mania—"

"Repeal *mania*! Oh, Maud!"

"He has much excuse for being an enthusiast. He has sprung from an oppressed race, and has broken off their chains. After doing such great things, he may well be

excused for thinking he can do things that are impossible."

"Impossible! You have certainly the coolest way of 'begging the question.' So much for reading Peelite newspapers."

"But, possible or not, do you think it right to keep the minds of your countrymen constantly in this feverish condition?"

"My dear girl, if the minds of the Irish people are not constantly directed by their political guides towards the redress of their grievances, they will always be slaves."

"I fear they will be worse slaves as long as they neglect honest labour to run after political phantoms. Look at the Scotch, for instance. If they can get on well without agitation, why should not we?"

"Well, that seems a poser;—but if I had fifty thousand of my countrymen assembled on this hill, I should be happy to spend an hour or two in giving them the reason why!"

"There it is. You have the dangerous gift of eloquence, and no wonder you are proud of it. But why not devote it to your profession, instead of working on the passions of an ignorant people? Surely you are lulling them in a vain dream;—and you can't expect that either you or they will feel the pleasanter when they awake from it."

These were remarkable words, coming naturally enough from a thoughtful girl, deeply interested in my welfare, and devoted to the study of the various newspapers in which my sayings and doings were so liberally canvassed. I had

heard similar sentiments expressed by the enemy a thousand times before, with all the brilliancy of rhetoric and force of logic ; but men are seldom convinced by arguments from an unfriendly quarter. *Now*, these arguments were enforced, not by an enemy, but by my dearest friend. It is little wonder, therefore, that they made a deep impression on my mind, and powerfully influenced my action at a subsequent important crisis of my history, when I was given the choice of continuing to agitate, or—but I must not anticipate.

People are so apt to lose their friends in the windings of the beautiful hill, that our little party had prudently arranged to reassemble at the gate lodge, where our cars were in waiting, not later than six o'clock. A little before that hour, therefore, Maud and I might have been observed bounding down the smooth grassy slope, as joyously as though the cares of an oppressed nation and the life of an imprisoned criminal were not weighing on my brain, and as though every downward step we took was not shutting us out from another glimpse of glory. We found the Lofthouses waiting for us, but my mother and Captain Etchingham had not arrived, and we felt some anxiety lest they should have gone astray amidst the sinuosities of Killiney. This anxiety increased to an unpleasant extent as some twenty minutes elapsed without any sign of the veterans, and we were beginning to deliberate earnestly as to the best mode of recovering them, when, to our great relief, they became visible on the horizon.

They came up with the look and air of persons charged with some great mystery, and I caught my mother saying to the captain in a significant tone—"Remember!" She gave herself unusual airs of importance, and said to me, as we were preparing to get on the car—"I have something extraordinary to tell you, Jack, but we must wait till we are in Kingstown."

What my poor mother might consider "something extraordinary" did not cause me much concern. It might be the discovery of a new title among the ancestors of the Etchingshams, or perhaps she had ascertained the damning fact that the Count von Pultuthowski had disgraced himself by becoming an opulent and successful opera-singer. Whatever it was, I had a most unfilial contempt for the poor dear lady's understanding; but I speedily found that even she could know what she was about, and that when there was an occasion to be improved, her instinct as a widow taught her how to improve it.

Arrived at Hayes's hotel she called me aside, and briefly informed me that Captain Etchingham had proposed.

"Proposed!—what do you mean? Proposed what?"

"Marriage, of course."

"Gracious heavens, mother, what nonsense! I know the man well. He must have meant something quite different, and you must have misunderstood him."

"—And has been accepted."

I knew by experience that the air of Killiney could work wonders, but certainly I should have thought such a pheno-

menon as this beyond it. I was not asleep. I did not dream. The hotel did not tumble about my ears, as it seemed ready to do, nor did the earth open to swallow my mother. Shortly afterwards I was actually dining with these unprecedented lovers, and before that day week I had discovered that there were madder things under the sun than even this maddest of all proposals. Such is life.

CHAPTER XV.

AID TO THE HEATHEN.

I HAVE already trespassed so largely on the reader's patience with my report of the Whiteboy case, that I shall spare him the details of "that most atrocious and horrible murder," as the shouting newsboys delighted to call it, the alleged perpetrator of which I was retained by Malachi Fitzsimon to defend. Notwithstanding my recent success, Malachi felt some natural hesitation in entrusting to me a case like this, which, being wholly unconnected with political or agrarian questions, could neither enlist popular sympathies, nor justify any claptrap appeals to the passions. He never forgot the attorney in the friend, and when retaining me he took good care that so fiery a charger (of juries) should again run in harness with the steady and experienced hack, Magee. I shall here briefly state that Magee did everything that human ingenuity could suggest to perplex and mystify as plain a case as ever was presented to a jury, and that I helped him in that laudable task to the best of my ability. Our exertions, however, must have proved in vain, only that fortunately there was a bosom friend of our client's on the jury, who

received all our sophisms in the best part, and held out so doggedly against the "all Ireland eleven" with whom he was yoked, that the prisoner got another chance for his life. I can't say it did him much good, as he was subsequently hanged for this very murder ; but meanwhile I scored another apparent victory. It was very fortunate that an incident so common in Ireland as a disagreement of the jury fell to my lot thus early in my career. I could not help thinking how hard it would be upon my criminal compatriots if their doom rested with a majority of the jury, as in Scotland ; but I took the goods the gods provided me, and felt devoutly thankful for any such amiable eccentricities among that noblest of all institutions, " twelve men upon their oaths."

Other attorneys besides Malachi now began to smile upon me, and I was retained to defend some of the primest ruffians in Ireland. I was upon the whole very successful, owing, I must honestly confess, much more to the idiosyncrasies of jurors, and to my popularity among them as a politician, than to any special merits either in my clients or in their defence. But one great point was gained. I could now swim without corks, and handle a criminal case very fairly without the aid of a leader ; and it seemed probable that by hard work and constant practice I should master my profession in other branches too. The long vacation, however, and the close of the assizes, checked my professional labours, and I was reduced for a while to a state of not unpleasant idleness, which was dispelled in a very curious and unexpected manner.

One day in August, as I was walking through Dame Street, I was accosted by a clergyman whom at first I did not recognize. A wolf in sheep's—or shepherd's—clothing is not easily detected; but a further scrutiny revealed to me under the disguise of that white neckcloth and shovel hat an old schoolfellow named Warren Barlow, of whom I had lost sight for many years, and whom I principally remembered as a very mischievous and harum-scarum lad. The imposition of clerical hands had since worked wonders for him. He was now duly commissioned to administer ghostly comfort within the limits of his own parish, and bade fair to become just as orthodox as another.

The Rev. Mr. Barlow made himself known to me, and warmly congratulated me on my worldly success, mildly hinting, however, that it was “a snare.”

“Come, come, Barlow, don't talk shop to me. I suppose you have no lurking hope of one day becoming a bishop yourself? *Nonvis episcopari*—eh?”

“These are matters not to be talked of lightly, my dear friend,” he replied, very meekly. Oh, he was humility itself! It would be the grossest of inhumanity to indulge in any unseemly jesting at his expense.

It soon appeared that, engrossing though his parochial duties were, he found much time to attend to the wants of the distant heathen. “We shall have a meeting in the Rotunda to-morrow night,” he said, “in aid of the society for evangelizing Polynesia. I earnestly hope you will come—and speak.”

"I?—I speak at a missionary meeting!"—and I burst out laughing.

"And why not, Westropp? You have remarkable oratorical powers—not to flatter you. Could they be exerted in a better cause?"

"Perhaps not. I have been exerting them of late in far worse causes, at all events."

"Well, then, what is to prevent you from kindly giving us the benefit of your eloquence?"

"Three reasons. In the first place, I am even as one of the heathen myself—just as you used to be when I knew you; in the second, I have never been a believer in missions; and in the third, I know nothing whatever about Polynesia."

"Oh, these are trifling objections, my dear friend. It is a wholesome sign to see you underrating your own merits; and if you only look over these tracts" (putting some into my hand) "you won't remain long in ignorance of those interesting and beautiful, but perishing regions. Do hearken to the appeal of an old schoolfellow, and let me put your name down in the list of speakers for to-morrow night."

"Well really, Barlow, if you had asked me to assist you in 'boxing the fox,' or a barring out, as of old, I could not feel half so surprised; but—let me see—since you press me so hard, I'll tell you what I shall do. I'll consult the Pope, and send you my answer by eight this evening."

"The Pope! Oh, dear friend, you alarm me. I know

you are mixed up with that party, but surely you have not embraced the errors of Romanism?"

"Certainly not—I'd much rather embrace the Pope. You look puzzled; but it's only a pet name for her, as I have always found her opinions infallible."

"Oh! *her*—humph—a lady!—very good. I see—I see. Well, if it's a lady, she is sure to recommend you to assist us."

And he proved right. When I stated my case to the infallible Maud, she opened her large eyes in wonder, and asked what possible objection I could have to pleading for so good a cause, now that it was my idle season.

"Simply because, with all my faults, I have always hated making a mockery of religion."

"And surely your friend does not want you to do so?"

"I suppose not; but wouldn't that be the result? Rightly or wrongly, the opinion has gone abroad that I am an inveterate wag, to put it mildly; perhaps even worse. Would the public be edified by my standing up before them to advocate missionary enterprise?"

"Certainly—if you speak as well as usual, and avoid anything like irreverence."

"Well, I hope to do that, at all events. And do you really and candidly recommend me to say yes?"

"Really and candidly I do."

"Then on your devoted head be the consequences. Here goes";—and I at once dashed off a line to Barlow, accepting his singular proposal.

On looking that night over the tracts with which I had been so strangely briefed, I found the natives of innumerable islands in the Pacific credited with practices so abominable, that Sydney Smith's supply of "cold missionary on the sideboard" was a mild horror in comparison, and that it made me shudder to think of any poor Irish gentleman going among them;—and yet I was actually to appeal to-morrow night for funds to promote such perilous immigration! I passed a somewhat restless night, haunted by visions of tomahawks, poisoned arrows, war dances, scalping, flaying alive, tarring and feathering, and similar recreations, and found in next morning's paper an advertisement of the projected meeting, with my name figuring conspicuously as one of the principal speakers. I could not help laughing heartily at the extreme absurdity of the task I had undertaken, and at the thought of the bewildered stare with which those who knew me best would read such an announcement. Sober reflections, however, soon succeeded. Maud had recommended me to do this, and therefore it must be done. Whatever was worth doing at all was worth doing well; and accordingly I devoted some time to careful meditation on my promised speech, though conscious that till I had my audience before me, and could actually feel their pulse, it was impossible to decide in what tone or terms to address them.

When evening arrived, it became evident that in securing the services of a man of my antecedents on such an occasion, the Rev. Warren Barlow had displayed much of

the wisdom of the serpent. The world delights in opposites—the more glaring the better; and the spectacle of a lord mayor on the tight rope, a bishop waltzing with a ballet dancer, or a duel between Quakers, could not have drawn better than that of Jack Westropp as a missionary propagandist. That it was neither a pure spirit of zeal for the cause, nor a desire to hear my estimable, but somewhat humdrum colleagues, which filled the round room to overflowing that night, was manifested by the appearance of several heterodox friends of my own, every man of whom had a broad grin on his face. My entrance was greeted with cheers which the newspaper reports styled enthusiastic, but which I secretly felt to be ironical. This suspicion induced me to assume an expression of gravity, not to say sternness, very unusual to me, in order to rebuke all unseemly demonstrations. It is true I was strongly tempted to merriment myself, as I called to mind other occasions on which I had held forth in that great room—especially the night of my encounter with the Orangemen. But I had still some character to maintain, Maud's eye was fixed on me, and I found it advisable to laugh only in my sleeve.

The Rev. Jacob Giltrap, D.D., having taken the chair, the secretary read the minutes of the last meeting, and gave some account of the society's work in Polynesia. I quickly saw that the audience—composed for the most part of ladies—took a strange delight in what is called “piling up the agony,” and took my cue accordingly. I must address

them in the raw head and bloody bones vein that old associations had made so easy to me, and must fall back on the meretricious style of gaudy and tinselled rhetoric which I had unlearned in the cold atmosphere of Parliament.

One or two prosaic persons having spoken, the chairman formally announced a resolution, entreating the public to contribute adequate funds for the purpose of evangelizing Polynesia, which resolution, he had the pleasure of stating, would be advocated by their distinguished fellow countryman John Wardlaw Westropp, Esq., M.P.

This announcement having been received with loud cheers and "movement of curiosity," I plunged boldly into the middle of the Pacific Ocean. "Polynesia, it might possibly be new to some of them, was derived from two Greek words, signifying 'many islands.' Oh, how many those islands were! How beautiful they were! And how sadly they were perishing for lack of that spiritual sustenance which such of them as were blest with this world's goods could so easily supply! Let them think of those mighty islands Borneo and New Guinea, each of them far larger than Great Britain itself, but without a trace of British civilization;—let them glance at the teeming groups of the Friendly Isles, the Philippine, the Society, the Solomon Isles, and others;—how strange it was to reflect that such names as 'Friendly,' 'Society,' and 'Solomon,' should have been given, as if in mockery, to communities that were at once unfriendly, unsocial, and unwise! There

they lay, auroral gems of the morning—basking in the azure beams of a tropical sun—exhaling the odours of aromatic spices—bathed in the freshest dews of heaven, and lulled by the eternal music that sweeps over the illimitable bosom of the deep (loud cheers). But alas, how deceptive was all that beauty !

‘Like Dead Sea fruits, that tempt the eye,
But turn to ashes on the lips.’

Only last night I had carefully read a few tracts issued by this association, and I was much mistaken if the result of my researches would not harass their souls.”

[Here I gave, amid cries of astonishment and horror, some terrible accounts of practices prevailing in the regions in question, and one old lady having been carried out in a very satisfactory state of hysterics, I proceeded.]

“Would my hearers refuse to contribute liberally for the support of missionaries who did not shrink from going forth to put an end to such atrocities? Doubtless there had been times when some of them were athirst;—how cool, how refreshing, then, was a tumbler of cold water ! (a voice—‘with a stick in it—that’s your sort.’ Interruption, indignation, cries of ‘put him out,’ prompt seizure, and summary ejection). What that tumbler of cold water was to the thirsty soul, the visit of the missionary was to the savage. Or it might have been the lot of some of those present to have lost their way at night in the midst of a mighty forest, where the winds whistled drearily through venerable oaks and elms. Their imaginations might have conjured up

tigers, panthers, murderers, spectres, shapes of nameless horror, ready to steal forth from dark and foul recesses, and their hearts might have sunk, and their hair stood on end in the silent agony of apprehension;—and then, at that awful moment, lights might have shone through the gloom, torches might have been carried aloft, friendly voices might have spoken comfort to the desponding soul. Was not that an image, a type, a symbol of the poor, naked, ignorant, howling savage, when the missionary—thanks to *their* exertions—appeared upon the scene, carrying light into dark places, making the wilderness blossom as the rose? (tremendous cheering). I feared I had already detained them too long (no, no). Other and abler speakers were to follow me. I had but devoted very imperfect consideration to this great subject (loud cries of no), but I would once more appeal to them in the name of civilization, in the name of their common humanity, to put their hands in their pockets, and contribute liberally towards the great and glorious work of evangelizing Polynesia.”

We are told that on Edmund Kean playing with his less gifted, but more respectable son, after their reconciliation, the great actor brought the house down by his thrilling cry, “Forgive thy wretched father!” as he threw himself on his son’s neck, and whispered, “I say, Charley, ain’t we doing the trick capitally?” I have heard powerful appeals from the pulpit itself, which I shrewdly suspected to elicit an “aside” of that sort from the preacher; and certainly it was in some such spirit I now received the hearty con-

gratulations of my old schoolfellow and others on my display. I had spoken for an hour, concluding just at the point when my hearers were manifestly desirous for more, and throwing them into a state of tumultuous excitement, in which paltry economy was quite forgotten, and a sum at least three times as large as had been expected was collected on the spot;—and I was voted by acclamation Vice-President of the Association, in the place of a noble earl just deceased.

So far so good. For some time afterwards, as on so many previous occasions, I was fated to experience the inconveniences of notoriety and success. My name headed those of the committee in the advertisements of the Association, which expressly stated that subscriptions might be received by Mr. Chisholm, hon. sec., Mr. Walker, the treasurer, or “any of the above,”—and naturally enough I was much sought after by the benevolent and the curious. Rich old ladies, overflowing with money and philanthropy, besieged my apartments at the Bilton, nor did I shrink from taking care of their contributions, engrossing though I represented a member of parliament’s duties to be, even in the recess. Many of these ladies were very careful to have their names and addresses correctly published. Much as they might abhor anything savouring of ostentation, they were naturally desirous of setting a good example. Others, however, shrank from display, and did not wish their right hands to know what their left hands did. This was a most estimable class, and their work left its mark in quarters

least expected. I received sums varying from five to fifty pounds from perhaps a dozen persons merely styling themselves "anonymous," as many more from "A Friend," one from "Polynesophile," several from "A.B.," some from "X.Y.Z.," others from "A Lover of the Heathen," and so on. It was the epidemic insanity of philanthropy. Now, I have long since pleaded guilty to a total incapacity for accounts. I should never have been worth my salt as a bookkeeper, and if I was unable to regulate my own finances properly, how much worse fitted must I have been to superintend those of others! I fell accordingly into grievous mistakes, and had to receive many troublesome visits, and read some teasing letters, with the view of having my errors corrected. To make matters worse, the *Retriever* condescended to give insertion to the following

"JEU D'ESPRIT ON A CONVERTED MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT.

"His care for bodies and for souls,
From Polynesia to the Poles,
Has so excessive grown,
That though long crippled for 'the ready,'
And in his cash accounts unsteady,
He now can *stand a loan*."

These malicious lines, so obviously aimed at me, were the subject of much comment in Dublin, and doubtless it was something more than a mere coincidence that from the date of their appearance my labours in the receipt of custom became extremely light. At all events, my duties in connection with the Association for evangelizing Polynesia were somewhat abruptly reduced to a minimum,

and accordingly I resigned the onerous post of vice-president. I had had, however, what the Americans call "a good time" for three or four weeks, and had no small reason to feel thankful for my friend Barlow's choice of a profession.

CHAPTER XVI.

INCLUDES AN AGITATING PERIOD.

AT the close of a recent chapter I stated that my mother and Captain Etchingham had suddenly and inconsiderately contracted a matrimonial engagement. The experienced elderly reader, indeed, may turn round on me, and ask what right had I, above all men, to call such an engagement inconsiderate. What was I? Had not Captain Etchingham his half pay, and enough left out of the wreck of an incomprehensible property, to support himself and a wife who was most unlikely to bless him with an heir? Was not the real rashness chargeable to me, who, with no certain income whatever, and in open violation of the teaching of Malthus, had plighted my troth to a penniless girl? There it is! That absurd conventional prejudice against elderly love-making continually leads us to the most monstrously illogical conclusions. Practically speaking, we paraphrase Falstaff, with a slight variation, and exclaim, "We that are young consider not the capacities of you that are old."

It seems so natural for young people to fall in love!

But what infatuation could have seized those veteran wanderers through the mazes of Killiney? Was it that each of them was—I use the word with reverence—somewhat “cracked”? It must be so. “Go to—there’s more sympathy!” I often puzzled my brain to divine the circumstances that could have led to so strange an engagement, and, shocking though it may appear for a son to say it, I fear that Mrs. Westropp must have taken the initiative. There are ways of proposing, though not in express terms. I think it highly probable that my mother, while expatiating on the many distinguished relatives both of the Westropp and the Etchingshams, may have ingeniously hinted that it was a pity to have so much respectability running to waste, when it could be strengthened by fusion,—and that the captain, who, like old Weller, had not thought much of marriage in the abstract, jumped at it when it was thus brought home to him in the concrete. It was a comfort, at all events, to reflect that neither of them could ever by any possibility be mistaken in the other. Endless are the subjects that engross the attention of husband and wife in the married state; but here it required no prophet to foretell that the gentleman would never talk of anything but his battles and his brother, and that the lady would confine her eloquence exclusively to the aristocracy of the County Clare, and the regions round about.

By general consent it was agreed that my mother should carry out her original programme of a continental tour with

the Lofthouses, at the conclusion of which she was to enter into holy matrimony with the captain. Whatever important changes, therefore, might be looming in the future, our way of living was not seriously altered for the present, and I can take up without difficulty the interrupted thread of my personal revelations. When the missionary business collapsed early in September, I found myself in possession of a couple of hundred pounds. Polynesian blacks had paid far better than Irish Whiteboys. How long would I take to earn that much at the bar! And whatever future successes hope or vanity might picture before me, reason whispered that there was a wide contrast between defending criminals before southern juries, and coping with the legal giants of *nisi prius* at the Four Courts. Yet I must aspire to do so. I must look to the future. I could not always subsist on Ireland, or Poland, or Polynesia, or, in a word, on my wits. That vague promise of a solicitor-generalship, conditional on a change of ministers, was highly tempting, but its fulfilment must depend on my becoming prominent among the higher members of my profession, toiling hard at work for which I felt myself quite unfitted, and running the daily risk of being detected in some fatal and irrevocable blunder.

I was walking through Sackville Street, revolving these considerations, when I met Mr. O'Connell, whom I had not seen for a fortnight, arm in arm with old Munkittrick. After a hearty greeting, O'Connell said that I was the very man he wanted to have a talk with, and we turned into my

rooms, which were close at hand. I gazed with admiration on the colossal frame, clear blue eye, and highly expressive face of the Liberator, still radiant with the bloom of health, and was forcibly struck by the contrast between him and his companion. As old Mun drew himself up with an air of the utmost gravity, and settled himself indomitably in his high shirt collars, I could not help thinking that, if his leader had something of the wisdom of Minerva, he might very well pass for her owl.

"I have been reading about you lately," said O'Connell, when we were seated, "and I am happy to find you are a converted man." The droll twinkle in his eye, as he spoke thus, seemed to indicate a slight suspicion that there was a "wrongful conversion" somewhere.

"Well, that's all over now," said I, "and I am done with the heathen for ever."

"So much the better. Life in the tropics is a black business, and you know the fate of those that touch pitch. But what say you to resuming your home missions for a while? It is the vacation season, of course, but a little agitation in Connemara would be only holiday work for a man like you."

"I am quite at your service. The fact is, I am rusting just now for want of something to do. In one respect I am like your old foe, Major Sirr. He seemed to hate a holiday even worse than a rebel, and if there is one thing on earth I don't know how to do, it is—to do nothing."

"I am delighted, my dear young friend," said old Mun,

putting in his oar, "to find you ready to give your country once more the benefit of services, which I trust will be as successful in their operation as I know them to be conspicuous by their talent."

A quiet wink from "Dan" showed how much he enjoyed the ornate verbiage in which his oracular friend was wont to illustrate and to obscure his meaning.

"Successful or not," said O'Connell, "the ball of agitation must be kept rolling, and I don't feel able to roll it with my old vigour. The fact is, I am not the man I was. I don't want the world to know it, but I am a good deal shaken."

"You don't look so, sir. I scarcely ever saw you looking better."

"Ay, I keep up appearances well enough. A public man must, and I above all men. And, thank God, there is still some cutting in me. But I have never been the same since those wretched State Trials."

"No wonder."

"And now I am deeply saddened by the news of a potato blight coming in from every side. Oh, where is it all to end? God help this wretched country!"

His vehement and impassioned Celtic nature was liable to strangely variable moods, and he now seemed as much depressed as he had been joyous and elated a moment before. I tried to raise his spirits with cheerful conversation, and we had a glass of wine, over which Mr. Munkittrick uttered the fervent aspiration—

“ May the genius of Erin, guided by her two most eloquent sons, hasten the arrival of the day when Catholic and Protestant will join hands together at the common shrine of freedom ! ”

“ May your shadow never be less, and may you ne’er want a friend nor a bottle to give him,” I was on the point of saying, so infectious did I frequently find the influence of old Mun’s metaphorical style. Checking so unseemly an impulse, however, I responded with a profoundly pious “ Amen ! ” and, having arranged some matters of detail with Mr. O’Connell, our conference broke up.

This interview solved at once the doubt that had been perplexing me so much. Here was the old warrior tempting me again with the sound of the trumpet, and deeply though I knew it would distress my darling Maud, I must go forth once more to battle. Long habit had made agitation a passion with me, as drunkenness or gambling is with other men, and now I was summoned to it by the arch-agitator himself, at a time when age and care were beginning to tell upon his powerful frame, and when the ambitious loud braying asses of the *Growler*, *Tornado of Erin*, etc., were daring to raise their heels against the decaying lion. It was no child’s play that lay before me. Revolutionary papers were now spreading their poison into every nook and corner of Ireland. They openly denounced constitutional agitation as an exploded farce, and singled me out for attack as one who practised it solely for selfish ends, and who felt only too happy at having a country to sell. My fellow countrymen, long accustomed to political guidance by

word of mouth, were now fast learning to read, and greedily did they drink in all this baleful teaching. What was to be done? How was I to flog the dead, or dying, horse of constitutional and "moral force" agitation?

It was a Herculean task, and one that could only be accomplished by holding crowded and stormy meetings, at which I should aspire to ride the whirlwind of democratic convulsion. I must use language far stronger than that which had compromised O'Connell two years before, and yet must keep like him strictly within the limits of the constitution, and thus put our hot-blooded rivals clearly in the wrong. Such was my programme; a dangerous one, no doubt, and destructive, the innocent reader might imagine, to my hopes of obtaining office. But there are two ways of winning favour from governments, whether Whig or Tory; one is by making one's self useful, the other by becoming formidable to them. In politics, as in the other affairs of life, the weakest must go to the wall; and I had learned from excellent private sources that government was not disposed to interfere with our game of brag unless in the event of some overt act of sedition. They were heartily sick of the absurd wind up of the prosecution of O'Connell in the previous year, and most reluctant to renew the tedious and hazardous process of state trials.

Such a trifle as a blight upon the potato crop, the appalling consequences of which were not then foreseen, could not damp the ardour of my countrymen for the freedom for which they were taught from their earliest boyhood to

struggle ; and consequently my appearance among them as an accredited ambassador of the Liberator drew large crowds, and excited much interest. Some, it is true, sulked, and others were disposed to revolt, but the very name of the old lion served as a charm to keep such unruly spirits in order. I talked very valiantly in several parts of the country, and if fierce words could have blown up the British Parliament, I should have proved a more dangerous enemy than Guy Fawkes himself. On one occasion, however, while guiding the chariot of the sun, I was very near urging the steeds into chaos. Towards the close of September I was addressing an excited crowd at Crossmolina, on the borders of Lough Conn, in Mayo, a paltry and thinly inhabited town, but to which great multitudes had flocked in expectation of an oratorical treat. There is always a strange sympathy between an orator and his audience ; and nothing used to surprise me more in my great chief than the perfect self-command which enabled him to preserve that sympathy from urging him into dangerous excesses. On the present occasion I became so excited as I gazed on the swarming multitude, eagerly drinking in and tumultuously applauding my words, that I lost the requisite self-control for a few moments, and after harping for some time on the old Celt and Saxon business, I was hurried into the following inconveniently plain expressions of feeling :—

“ But shall they trample upon us in the future ? (loud cries of ‘ never ’) I like those cries. Perhaps we may make the country too warm to hold them yet. We have had a

cold and wet summer this year, I am sorry to say, but you know there was an unusually hot summer in ninety-eight (tremendous cheers for '98). Yes—we are now almost within sight of Killala Bay, where the French landed in that memorable year, so reddened with the blood of patriots. How would you exult to hear that a French force was again steering to your shores, to summon you to liberty or vengeance! (great enthusiasm). Men of Crossmolina, make the best use you can of foreign aid, but remember that, after all, your destinies rest with yourselves. Your own stout hearts must face the storm of battle. Your own strong arms must strike the blow. Be true to the spirit of your fathers—to the shades of Brian Boroihme, of Fitzgerald, of Emmet—and as sure as there is justice in heaven you shall yet win your freedom, either from Parliament, or by the pike and the sword!”

Have you ever, reader, committed yourself in society, by rash and inconsiderate speech? Have you ever thoughtlessly sneered at red noses when talking to a man who might have reminded you of Bardolph? Have you ever asked a lady at dinner who was that very ugly woman opposite, and been informed that it was—her sister? If you have, like myself, and like most impulsive talkers, been guilty of such solecisms, how anxiously have you desired to soften down your unintentional offence, and how much worse have you made it by stammering attempts to prove that you meant something completely different! Assuming that you have sometimes erred in this wise, you will

sympathize with my feelings when I suddenly recollected that I had gone much too far, and caught the eye of my friend Jones, of the *Firebrand*—fortunately the only reporter there—fixed upon me with an expression of mute wonder. Oratory, like poetry, hurries us at times beyond the bounds of reason; but when the poet's frenzy gives place to returning wisdom, he can always tear up his rash effusions, whereas the orator can never recall his winged words. These thoughts flashed like lightning through my brain, and I was about to show that I meant in reality something very different from excitement to violence, when I perceived that I had even more reason to dread the immediate than the remote consequences of my rash utterances.

The stalwart "men of Crossmolina" were an unsophisticated race, who had no notion that "language has been given to man for the purpose of concealing his thoughts" On the other hand, they believed me to be perfectly sincere in urging them to action, and showed at once that they had had enough of talk. My ears were stunned with such sounds as—"Arrah, Tim, that's the way to spake out"—"Begorra he's the broth of a boy"—"Three cheers for the Frinch"—"Down with the Saxon"—"Tare-an-ages, let me at them," and the like, the whole assembly dispersing tumultuously in search of cudgels, or other weapons "handy to break a skull with." I saw with no little consternation that I had completely lost all control over the populace whom it was my business to have kept well in

hand, and that they were on the high road to commit some outrage—such as an attack on the police barrack—for which the authorities would hold me mainly responsible, and which would quite destroy the game I went there to play. It was a moment of anxious apprehension, recalling vividly as it did the dangerous scene immediately before the trial at K——, and, imitating Magee's tactics on that occasion, I rushed at once to the parish priest, always the main support of the "constitutional" agitator.

Father Slattery, a hospitable, good-tempered, elderly man, was naturally very angry at first, but on my frankly confessing the mistake into which I had been led by the heat of oratory, he sallied forth with me to repair the confusion I had caused amongst his flock. He quickly seized upon Peter Talty, a large strongly-built man, who looked disposed to play the part of a Jack Cade, but who was in truth a very lamb in presence of the Church.

"Is this you, Peter? What kimmeens are you up to at all? Can't you be quiet?"

"Is it quiet, your reverence, and the Saxon thramplin' on us this-a-way? Never! Come on, boys!"

There was a cheer, but somehow it was very faint.

"Well, Peter Talty, for a father of a family, standing six feet in his stockings, you're as great a baby as ever I saw. Couldn't you let Mr. Westropp finish his speech? I suppose that's the way you'd treat the Liberator, if he came here."

Loud cheers for the Liberator, and "down with Peel"!

"Sure, your riverence, didn't he say he wished the Frinch was comin'?"

That foolish trope of mine had been received in sober earnest. A happy thought suggested that I might make even such a popular misconception instrumental in restoring harmony.

"Yes," said I, "and maybe they will yet—but won't you give them time to come? Surely you can't expect them to come in an hour, or a day?"

"And whin'll they come, sir? That's the questhen."

"Oh, it is really impossible to say the exact time;—and here you are, flourishing your shillelaghs—"

("Like a pack of omadhauns") gravely soliloquized their ghostly father.

"Like a set of brave, but misguided patriots, instead of keeping quiet, and waiting for them to come, with their beautiful swords and guns, and their big brass cannons, that would smash the whole British Parliament to smithereens, as easy as I take this pinch of snuff."

Admitting the truth of my premisses, there was no gain-saying the force of my conclusions. A very few words from Father Slattery and myself speedily converted the redoubtable Peter Talty from an emissary of sedition into an apostle of peace. He exercised a most soothing influence over the minds of his disturbed compatriots; and profound calm was to all appearance prevailing in Crossmolina, as I proceeded to partake of the priest's hospitality.

I mentioned that Jones, of the *Firebrand*, was the only

reporter present at the scene just described, and he was careful to suppress all mention alike of the violence of my language and of the action it had evoked. Whether it was, however, that a spy or a policeman in plain clothes managed to be present, I know not ; but my fiery words, and the stormy scene that followed them, were duly reported at Dublin Castle. Nor was this all. During my tour through Connemara and my native Clare I held other scarcely less excited meetings, attended by thronging thousands. My listeners were only too happy to sit at the feet of a Gamaliel who promised them Repeal of the Union, the expulsion of the Saxon, fair rent, fixity of tenure, and various other-rare boons ; and many incidents occurred at those meetings which called for notice in high quarters. My conduct accordingly was maturely considered at a special meeting of the Privy Council. Was I a serious politician ? Perhaps not, but I was an extremely inconvenient one to suffer to be at large unmuzzled. The doctors of the state diagnosed my case as dangerous. Such an offending member could no longer be allowed to taint the body politic. I must be dealt with in some way—"mended or ended." By coercion or conciliation, by amputation or anodyne, by drastic drugs or soothing syrup, the fever in my blood which proved so contagious must be abated, and I must cease to vex the state.

CHAPTER XVII.

A MYSTERIOUS VISIT.—MY PULSE IS FELT BY A PHYSICIAN OF THE STATE.

My autumn campaign was over. The middle of October had arrived, and I was endeavouring to keep up the appearance of conversation with a few idle friends in Kildare Street club-house, while my wandering thoughts were far away, divided between visions of ambition and love.

“What a small funeral poor Tottenham had yesterday,” said one. “The day certainly was not tempting, and very few people have returned to town yet.”

“Indeed?” said I, listlessly. “What’s this he was?—some unpronounceable title in the Four Courts?”

“Protocol—prototype—protomartyr—I’ll forget my own name next. Here it is—protofilist!” he cried, taking up a newspaper. “Protofilist in the Court of Chancery—whatever that means—with a salary of two thousand five hundred a year, and nothing whatever to do but sign a receipt for his salary every quarter day. And yet poor Tottenham never paid anyone!”

“Is the office in the gift of the Lord Chancellor?”

"No—of Government. Another Irish grievance for you, Westropp."

"I wish to heaven they would give me the post," said another. "I'd gladly undertake the duties for half the money. What an excellent opportunity it would give government for retrenchment !"

"I am afraid you're of the earth, earthy, Lestrangle," said I. "I don't like this hankering after filthy lucre."

"Ha ! I suppose you would not take it yourself if it was offered to you ?"

"I never pretended to despise money, but you know I live only for my country. In her decay—in her resurrection—we are bound together. If Ireland suffers, I must suffer with her. It is my destiny. If she becomes once more a nation, she will not forget her self-sacrificing sons, who have borne the burden and heat of the day."

"By Jove !" said the first speaker, "Westropp has spouted this cant of patriotism so long that I half believe he is beginning to think himself in earnest at last !"

Ah, they were sad dogs, these clublings ! No earnestness, no sincerity, no patriotism among them—swayed by no lofty impulse—judging every one by themselves—appealing always to the lowest and most mercenary of human motives. And yet, as I took occasion to remind them with some warmth, the very name of the sinecurist whose death had led to that conversation might have reminded them of the claims of fatherland, by recalling "Tottenham in his boots"—a gentleman who had earned that immortal *sobriquet* by rushing, travel-stained and mud-bespattered

after a long ride, into the Irish House of Commons, to record his vote against a measure that he thought injurious to his country.

Next morning I rose pretty early, having arranged to meet Maud at half-past nine o'clock, and spend the day with her *tête-à-tête* at Howth. I had just breakfasted, and was about to leave the Bilton, when I was surprised by a visit from Sir Whippingham Packe, Bart., M.P., an eminent and useful member of the Peel government. What in the name of wonder could have driven him to *me*, above all men in the world? I was probably about to be honoured with a state prosecution, owing to recent events, but surely the enemy was not coming in person to tell me so?

"My dear Sir Whippingham, I am delighted to see you. Have you breakfasted?"

"Yes. I have just arrived at the North Wall, and am going direct to the Chief Secretary on important business. You are the first man I have called on, and I'm glad to find you an early riser."

"Many thanks. I feel the visit an honour.—Come over, I suppose, to look at the poor old country in her ruin and decay? How you English do delight in gloating over our miseries!"

"So far from that, Westropp, I admire Dublin very much. I really don't know anything of its kind as fine as your bank."

"Bank!" I exclaimed with a start. "Name not the horrid word!"

"And what am I to call it?"

"Our House of Parliament!" I said proudly. "If you come to it next summer, I hope to be able to introduce you to Mr. Speaker as a distinguished fellow senator from the English side."

"Ha ha ha! I'm afraid I shall have to wait a little longer for that honour," said he, laughing.

I saw by this time that there was no intention to prosecute me, at all events, so that I could meet Maud with an easy mind, but I was still profoundly mystified as to the cause of this visit from such a man. It could scarcely be owing to mere courtesy or good feeling. What then? A politician is always justified in suspecting some sinister design on the part of the enemy, and I must remain carefully on my guard. Sir Whippingham's next remark seemed by no means likely to clear up the mystery.

"By-the-bye," said he, "this is a sad case of poor Tottenham, one of your leading officials here. I suppose you knew him?"

"Yes—a little. A wonderfully lucky fellow. Who'll get the place, do you know?"

Sir Whippingham looked cautiously around, and coughed slightly.

"That is a matter on which we should like to consult public opinion in Ireland."

"It's nearly time for you to think of doing so;—but better late than never."

"Believe me, my dear Westropp, we always try to act for

the best. Of course you know poor Tottenham was a mere aristocrat—a butterfly. Now we think so valuable a place should be given to some one with real and serious claims on his country.”

I began to have a dim perception that the clouds and mists that had hung over this visit were about to clear a little, and I looked as grave as the chief justice.

“I shall be happy,” said I, “to give you any assistance in my power in arriving at a conclusion. Two thousand five hundred a year, I believe, is the figure?”

“Yes;—and nothing whatever to do. There is not a better thing under the Crown. I am authorized to speak on behalf of ministers on this subject, and it is their firm conviction that so lucrative a post should be given to a man of earnestness and talent—a man of unquestioned patriotism—a man who has earned repose by years of labour—a man whose want of private means would make so ample a salary an object.”

“It may be possible to find a man answering these conditions,” said I.

“I am happy to hear you say so;—and the post has this advantage to a patriot, that it involves no surrender of principle whatever, and enforces nothing but silence, and complete retirement from the turmoil of public life.”

“And incapacitates its holder from a seat in Parliament?”

“Certainly.”

“If anything so ridiculous should happen,” said I, speaking dreamily, and as if for argument’s sake, “as that

such a post were offered to *me*, I should have to balance some serious disadvantages against obvious inducements. In the first place, the indignation of my constituents would be very great."

"Pooh! constituencies have always short memories."

"Then there is a virulent and hostile press."

"Which carries about as much weight as the goose-quill that writes its articles."

"And, worst of all, one's own private feelings."

"You will soon get over them, I promise you. When you receive your first quarter's salary—"

"When I receive it! Why bless me, Sir Whippingham, you must be joking. You don't mean to say that this post is offered to *me*?"

"I do mean to say that, under all the circumstances of the case, government is of opinion that it would be impossible to fix upon a more eligible man than yourself, simply because they feel deeply the too great neglect of Irish talent and patriotism that has characterized so many of our more valuable appointments;—and I trust I shall have no difficulty in overcoming any scruples you may feel."

"My dear Sir Whippingham, you surprise me beyond measure. I am accustomed to strange things in public life, but really if I heard that the Shah of Persia wished to make me his prime vizier, or the Emperor of Russia appointed me to the chief command of his armies, it would not amaze me so much as Sir Robert Peel offering me a valuable sinecure."

“Oh, we men of the world soon get accustomed to such surprises ;—and after all there is nothing more natural. Of course you consent ? ”

“Well, that is a question not to be answered in a moment. You will give me at least twenty-four hours to think over it, and consult my friends ? ”

“I really cannot. The Chief Secretary is to meet me at the Castle at eleven o'clock to-day, on this and some other subjects, and I am bound to convey to him your acceptance or refusal. Pooh, pooh, Westropp ! between ourselves, as common-sense men of the world, you *can* have no possible objection.”

“I don't know that at all ;—but just amuse yourself looking over these newspapers, and I will be with you in five minutes.” And I retired to my bedroom to think.

Bribed to silence—palpably, but splendidly, bribed ! Such was my first reflection. The government, disgusted at the failure of the previous state prosecutions, and probably exaggerating my influence over the minds of my countrymen, and my capacity for future mischief, had offered a golden bridge of retreat to a troublesome enemy. The temptation was certainly tremendous, and they had acted cunningly in not allowing me time to consider all that was to be said against my yielding to it ; yet I must try hurriedly, and in a wild confused sort of way, to look at both sides of the question.

The Irish people—i.e. “the *residuum*”—whose minds I had so long inflamed, and who had so frequently heard me

denounce in scathing terms the bribery by pensions and peerages that had led to the passing of the Union, would at first be ready to tear me to pieces. But pshaw! what were the Irish people? Had I not given them plenty of amusement and excitement in return for their free-will offerings? Surely this sort of thing could not go on for ever, and I could not afford to starve for their sakes. A career of agitation, it is true, had the highest possible attractions for me—my own mind having been fully as much debauched by it as those of my disciples—and had I been a disengaged man, or had Maud been a “Nationalist,” no bribe should have induced me to shrink into the dull monotony of private life. But there was the real rub. Maud’s emphatic condemnation of my advocacy of Repeal, and her frequent and earnest entreaties not to inflame the minds of my countrymen with false hopes, lent to the present proposal its strongest allurements. As for my chances of success at the bar, and my hopes of future promotion when the Whigs should regain power, I acknowledged in a moment that that was all moonshine. A Tory bird in the hand was worth a whole Whig aviary in the bush. I knew in my heart that nothing would ever make me a lawyer, and I had sufficient self-respect to dread being exposed as a charlatan. There was just one remaining consideration which staggered me a good deal;—what would Daniel O’Connell say to my accepting a post from Robert Peel? The great old man had always been to me the truest of friends. All that success in public life which made me formid-

able to-day I owed to his patronage, his advice, and his example. At a time like this, when his strength was failing, and when so many village curs were barking against the lord of the forest, was I, his trusted lieutenant, to plant a new thorn in his breast, and help by my ingratitude to hurry him to his grave? That reflection tormented me bitterly, I burned to overcome this temptation, to rush to Sir Whippingham Packe, and tell him that no earthly consideration should induce me to accept his offer ;—but alas, I was a poor man, and I knew nothing of law, and I was tired of living by my wits, and I was longing to marry Maud Etchingham, and there was a great deal of counting in two thousand five hundred a year !

My mind was rapidly made up. I must accept this offer, and I must make a compliment of accepting it.

“Sir Whippingham,” said I, on rejoining him, “your proposal is certainly a tempting one from some points of view, and I am sorry you could not give me time to think more coolly over it, and consult my friends. I am a poor man now, but I may honestly tell you that I had hoped, with my position in Parliament, and some little footing I have gained in the estimation of my countrymen, to rise one day to the highest honours of the bar and the bench.”

“Very good ; and I have no doubt you are fully justified in such an expectation. Believe me, no one would be prouder than I to see you made Lord Chancellor. But then you know the advantages of a certainty, and of immediate possession.”

"Yes; of course I can't be insensible to them. But here is a serious consideration;—I have an unfortunate habit of running in debt, which your barbarous English laws render an offence punishable by imprisonment. As a member of Parliament I am free from such an outrage on the liberty of the subject, and I assure you I prize that privilege highly, but as protofilist I should again be liable to arrest for some trifling confusion in my accounts."

This "serious consideration" made the baronet laugh very heartily. "Excuse me, Westropp," he said, "but really this latest Irish grievance is too much for me. Ha ha ha!—capital! But I am happy to say you need not make yourself uneasy. Poor Tottenham, it's well known, paid nobody, and his creditors once arrested him on his way to his office. He pleaded the necessities of the public service as paramount; and the Insolvent Court held that on those occasions when his presence was required in his office—(very few, I need not tell you)—his person was sacred as long as he proceeded in a direct line from his house to the Four Courts."

"A most admirable ruling," said I, "and one which relieves me of much anxiety. Then I suppose I must succeed him as protofilist, though I fear I'm badly fitted to fill such a post."

"Why, I thought I told you there is nothing at all to do."

"Exactly—the very thing I mean. You know doing nothing is considered the hardest work under the sun."

“ I believe so—by the moralists.”

“ And the moralists are right ;—but no matter. When is my sentence of hard labour to take effect ? ”

“ Not for about a fortnight, as your appointment will have to be made out under the Great Wax.”

It struck me that my constituents, and many of my colleagues, would be in “ a great wax ” when they heard of it. Sir Whippingham, who had to return to London on the following night, arranged to lunch with me at two o'clock next day, and discuss the matter further, and so we parted.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SHOWS HOW SOMEBODY ELSE IS PUT INTO TOTTENHAM'S
BOOTS.

I WAS now somewhat late for my appointment, and no man must be late for an appointment with his lover. Calling a car, I offered the jarvey double fare to drive with the utmost speed to Warrington Place. I felt like one upborne on airy wings on my way thither. The great mystery of existence—how to support it in comfort—was solved at last. It would no longer be necessary for me to live on the precarious alms of national gratitude, or to prey on Fogartys, Fontenoys, and fools. Such courses had often grated on that fine sense of delicacy which I had inherited from my mother, but I had been driven to them by the poverty that I had derived from my father. I have already said distinctly that my personal predilections were in favour of honesty, but that honesty was a very expensive virtue. Surely I could afford to practise it on my new salary, and with Maud as my chancellor of the exchequer!

I found that young lady shawled and bonneted for her journey. Assuming an appearance of as much gravity as I could command at such a moment, I said,—

"I have a surprise for you, dearest. Though it's so early, I have had a visit this morning—a very strange and important one, too."

"Indeed! from whom?"

"From a gentleman deep in the confidence of the government," said I, looking very serious; "a personal friend of Sir Robert Peel's. He came expressly from London to call on me, and his visit is one of great significance. It will alter my future plans wonderfully."

"Oh, how you frighten me!"

"You need not be alarmed. It was only to tell me that I have come in for two thousand five hundred a year."

"Oh, Jack!—it is cruel for you to joke this way,"—and she sank upon a chair, much agitated.

"But this is no joke, love—and I have called to 'name the day,' which had better be in the first week of next month, when my mother will be home, and able to follow our example;—that is, of course, if you have no objection to such haste."

Here some absurd proceedings, not worth commemorating, put an end to all rational conversation for a while. Where was the use of rational conversation? We should have time enough for that, in all conscience.

"But you are such an extraordinary fellow, Jack," she said, when speech became possible. "I know you are not deceiving me, but how in the world could you come in for such a fortune?"

"Simply enough. Have you ever heard of the famous 'Tottenham in his boots'?"

"Yes."

"Well, a namesake of his is out of his boots, and I'm to be put into them—that's all. The fit is perfect."

"What nonsense you are talking!"

"Nonsense!—I see with all your wisdom, you are a poor hand at guessing a riddle. Know then that Mr. Tottenham, a high official in the Court of Chancery, has gone to glory, or elsewhere, and I am appointed his successor."

"You?—*you* appointed to a government office!"

"And why not *I*? greater fools are put into them every day. My new office has the beautiful classical title of 'Protofilist';—first file, I suppose it means; at all events, it will enable us to play first fiddle."

Here, descending from the airy heights of felicity in which I spurned the dull terrestrial globe, I gave her a brief sketch of my interview with Sir Whippingham Packe, cautioning her to profound silence about it for a few days.

Her delight on hearing my communication was only equalled by her amazement at my having hesitated for a moment to accept so splendid an offer.

"Yes," said I, "and if I had not been foolish enough to fall in love, I would not have hesitated for a moment to reject it. How will I ever lead a quiet life? Do tell me you hate me—say you have changed your mind, and won't have me, and always felt you were throwing yourself away on me—and instead of going to Howth, I'll run off to the

Castle, and tell Sir Whippingham I was only making a fool of him ! ”

No ; this stubborn Tory damsel would not be guilty of a breach of promise, to enable me to shake off the golden fetters that must for ever restrain my patriotic ardour. So submitting with a good grace to my double thralldom, at the hands alike of Plutus and of Cupid, and leaving the wrongs of centuries to take care of themselves, I proceeded with my fair enslaver to Howth, where I passed a day that made me feel life was worth living.

Shortly after breakfast next morning I sat down at my desk, and, after meditating for some time on the situation, wrote slowly and carefully the following “ feeler,” for insertion in the *Firebrand* a day or two later :—

“ Our readers have already been apprised that, by the lamented death of Algernon Percy Clinton Tottenham, Esq., the office of protofilist in the Irish Court of Chancery, the duties of which are understood to be light, and to which nevertheless a handsome salary is attached, is placed at the disposal of government. We trust that in the distribution of this piece of patronage our rulers will depart from their former unfortunate policy of systematically ignoring the claims and aspirations of the Irish people. We say nothing here of the propriety of maintaining valuable sinecures, but it is clear that, as long as they exist, they should be awarded to men who have deserved well of their country, rather than to those who have nothing to recommend them but aristocratic connections and backstairs influence. Some

man who has shown his love of Ireland alike by his words and his deeds—who has sacrificed personal objects and professional emoluments in her cause—and whose years of unselfish toil make a haven of repose welcome, if not imperatively necessary, to him—such a man should be appointed to the vacant post, and such a man, we unhesitatingly say, can be found. We may return to this subject again. For the present we shall content ourselves with rigidly scrutinizing the action of the government, and expressing a hope that it will be in accordance with the best wishes and interests of the people.”

Having completed this article, and read it over three or four times, carefully weighing every word it contained, I folded it up, and placed it in my pocket-book. I then walked about the room for some minutes, plunged in profound meditation, and thus proceeded to take the public into my confidence with feeler Number Two, for use at a later date :—

“In a recent issue we took occasion to advert to the vacancy created in the office of Chancery protofilist by the death of Mr. Tottenham, and to the necessity for studying the wishes of the people in appointing his successor. We have reason to believe that our representations have not been quite in vain. We are able to state on the best authority that, while the matter is still under consideration, the government is disposed to yield so far to the appeals we have urged as to appoint only a man of tried patriotism. This at all events is a step in the right direction. Would

that we could take it as an indication of a more generous future policy for our oppressed and down-trodden country ! We need not say we have never been among the supporters of the present government. On the other hand it has been our painful duty, on many occasions, boldly and manfully to denounce those measures of coercion that have been so systematically extended to Ireland under the Tory *regime*. Our motives, therefore, will not be misunderstood when we confess ourselves disposed, with the Liberator, thankfully to accept any 'instalment of justice,' and such an instalment we confidently expect in the announcement of Mr. Tottenham's successor. Of course we are not concerned to speculate on the names of individuals. Nothing could be easier than to show that the appointment of men like"—(here I mentioned three well-known Repealers, who had about as much chance of a government post as the Wellington testimonial)—"would reflect the highest credit on the administration. Or—to give a still more conspicuous name—if the honourable member for Gulgreina could be induced to overcome his well-known objections to office, the country would learn with delight that a long though early career of generous self-sacrifice had at last been crowned with repose. But, we repeat, it is idle to mention names where all must be vague speculation, and we have only to say, once for all, that, on whomsoever the choice of government may fall, he must be some man well approved of for patriotism, and for sacrifices in the good cause. On that point there must be no mistake. We pro-

mise to watch closely the action of the authorities in this matter. In a national point of view it may seem trifling ; but even a feather can show how the wind blows."

I had got thus far when Sir Whippingham Packe arrived.

"How do you do, Westropp? I have had a very satisfactory interview with the Chief Secretary, and I am the bearer of this letter from him, simply informing you that you have got the post, and that your appointment only awaits the usual formalities." The letter commenced, "My dear Sir"—and this from a man whom I had been abusing like a pickpocket all through my recent tour of agitation, and who knew it! Wonderful is the urbanity, the meekness, the Christian spirit of forgiveness, of your high state official!

Sir Whippingham's face beamed with pleasure as he handed me the letter, and I do believe this man of broad acres, strong political antagonist though he was, felt a genuine pleasure in the success of one who, spider-like, had had to weave his own provision from his brain. It is so easy and so graceful to be good-natured—especially at the expense of the taxpayer!

"Thanks, Sir Whippingham, you are very good. Whether I was right in accepting office or not, I feel your kindness deeply. But I made one great mistake in dealing with you yesterday."

"Indeed! How was that?"

"It's a terrible pity I did not stand out for three

thousand a year while I was about it, and had you in my power. Unfortunately I did not think of it till I was on the hill of Howth. I'll always consider that the chief blunder of my life."

"You Irish are perfect cormorants," he said, laughing. "So much for being a disciple of 'the big beggerman.'"

"So much for your cleverness in only giving me five minutes to think of my answer. I knew vaguely I consented too soon, but I had no idea where the shoe would really pinch."

Luncheon having been produced, Sir Whippingham drank my health in a glass of champagne, saying—

"I congratulate you heartily on serving under Peel instead of *Repeal*. Long may you live to fill your new office."

"Ah, I fear I shall fill it badly enough."

"Why so?"

"I was never clever at doing nothing. From six to ten I broke more panes of glass, worried more cats, and frightened more maidservants than any other boy in the parish, and you know 'the boy is father to the man.'"

"Which clearly shows we are acting wisely in putting you in a quiet post, where your powers of mischief will be kept within due bounds. You know you have been running riot of late. By-the-bye, I hope you have not mentioned this to any one?"

"Certainly not."—Maud was part of myself, and therefore counted for nothing.

"Quite right. You had better keep silent about it for a few days, and—I say—could not you do something towards preparing the minds of your countrymen for your appointment, through the press?"

"That is the very thing I have been endeavouring to do," I replied, and taking out my pocket-book I afforded him satisfactory proofs of my promptitude and prescience, by reading the two articles I had just written.

"Ha! ha! ha!—capital—excellent!" And he laughed loud and long. "After all it's a pity you are retiring so early, Westropp. There is an able politician lost in you."

"Why do you remind me of that?" I asked, gloomily enough. "You little know what my aspirations have been—what day dreams you have shattered for ever. No man was fonder of the battle of politics than I;—and now, before I am twenty-eight, I am declared a veteran, and must retire from the struggle."

"But full of glory."

"I'm afraid my countrymen will dispute that."

"Well—unwounded, and paid like a commander-in-chief."

"Ah, yes, Sir Whippingham, I spoke foolishly. But it's the old story. Man is never content."

We parted after luncheon, with assurances of mutual esteem, and then, before proceeding to join Maud, I dashed off my third and last article, as follows:—

"We have referred more than once to the vacancy created

in the office of Chancery protofilist, because we think that appointments so valuable should not be filled up without consulting the public opinion of the country. We are now happy to be able to state that our representations have not been neglected, and to announce on the highest authority that the honourable member for Gulgreina is the successor to Mr. Tottenham. Hitherto delicacy forbade us from mentioning the vast number of communications strongly urging Mr. Westropp's claims, that have reached us, but now we may frankly state that we have all along considered him the fittest man for the post, though we shrank from saying so while our opinion might possibly have proved prejudicial to others. Mr. Westropp never sought for the office, and felt considerable hesitation in accepting it. It is well known that the tiresome routine of official duties has no attraction for him, that his talents and his aspirations led him to the stormy scenes of public life, that it was in the forum, the platform, the House of Commons, that he felt at home. By pursuing a political career it was manifest that he would not only have added largely to his fame, but would have attained a position compared with which his new office must seem insignificant. We may regret the early discontinuance of such brilliant public services, but we must respect the noble contempt for fortune and power that reconciled Mr. Westropp to an arrangement which will probably prove a bond of peace and harmony between the two countries." I felt strongly tempted to add here something to this effect:—"The

miserable journals which have already largely enhanced Mr. Westropp's reputation by their scurrilous attacks on him, have not neglected their congenial task of calumny and vituperation during the past week, when it was only barely surmised that he might be appointed protofilist. Now that the appointment is finally confirmed, we may expect them to revel in their impotent ribaldry, unrestrained by common decency, to say nothing of patriotism." Reflection convinced me, however, that it was wiser to treat with silent contempt the attacks which I knew would be made upon me, so I merely wound up with the usual formula : "We can assure him that he carries with him into the calm haven of retirement the warmest sympathies of his personal friends, and the general respect and admiration of the public."

CHAPTER XIX.

A GREAT DAY FOR IRELAND.

My extensive survey of mankind, if not from China to Peru, at least from Polynesia to the Poles, is fast drawing to a close. When virtue is rewarded with Maud Etchingham and 2500*l.* a year, what more can the most insatiable reader require? The curtain of married life is not to be drawn. My subsequent exploits and catastrophes, it is true, were singular and striking, and “Westropp married ; or, the Last of the Sinecurists,” might feel justified in seeing the light as well as another ; but literary prejudice is in favour of bachelor heroes, and as I share that prejudice myself, there is no probability of my reappearing before the footlights in the novel capacity of a Benedick.

The mystery that enshrouds my duties as protofilist—a post abolished at the period of my retirement on a pension—must also remain inviolate. Every man thinks that the holder of other offices than his own has little or nothing to do ;—but let that pass. As an abstract question, I still adhere to the philosophical opinion I had expressed to Sir Whippingham Packe, that doing nothing is the hardest

work under the sun. It must be confessed, however, that even the severe toils of perfect idleness are mitigated very much by beginning them early in life, and a honeymoon passed on the Continent with Maud was no unpleasant introduction to the Castle of Indolence.—But I must not anticipate.

My mother and the Lofthouses arrived in Dublin about the end of October, and were naturally delighted at finding my appointment an accomplished fact. The salary, as my mother observed in her patronizing way, was very handsome, and, considering that I should have nothing to do, might even be called splendid;—and yet even that was not the highest recommendation of the post of protofilist. Its unimpeachable respectability—its classical and incomprehensible title—these things made it fit for any gentleman, and as it had long been held by a Tottenham, it might now properly devolve upon a Westropp. That the poor dear ridiculous mother might not re-enter the holy state of matrimony penniless, Lofthouse and I agreed to fix four hundred a year on her between us.

Daniel O'Connell, as I had expected, heard of my defection in sorrow and anger, but even he had been gradually prepared for it by my "inspired" paragraphs, and his wrath was not now what it had once been. I took the first opportunity of calling personally on him, and showing cause why the conditional order of his condemnation should not be made absolute. I succeeded far more readily and more completely than I could have hoped. O'Connell was

too thorough a gossip not to have heard already that I was engaged to a portionless girl, and when he adroitly elicited it from me by a couple of questions, and heard me say that no earthly consideration but this engagement should have induced me to give up the battle for Repeal, I had the audacity suddenly to ask him to my wedding breakfast. In my pleasure at his acceptance of the invitation, I quite lost sight of a fact which on reflection filled me with alarm and confusion. Captain Etchingham, who looked on him as an incarnate Beelzebub, was to be married along with me ! How was I to effect a harmonious meeting between two such men ?

Readers of Boswell will remember how ingeniously he intrigued to bring Dr. Johnson and Wilkes together at dinner, and how, when he had succeeded in doing so, the demagogue placed himself beside the moralist, and gained on his favour through his stomach, tendering him—"A little of the brown—Some fat, sir—A little of the stuffing—Some gravy—Let me have the pleasure of giving you some butter—Allow me to recommend a squeeze of this orange ; or the lemon, perhaps, may have more zest." Such attentions proved irresistible. The "surly virtue" of the great doctor at last collapsed, and henceforth he treated even the obnoxious hero of the cap of liberty as a man and a brother. That delicate negotiation occurred forcibly to me, now that I too had an "illustrious friend" and patron to introduce to a strong political opponent. I had only just made the arrangement with Lofthouse in my mother's favour, and I

naturally thought that such news would prove as mollifying to her bridegroom as gravy and stuffing to the sage.

On joining the captain, he plunged as usual into his engrossing theme.

"This is a grand position you have got, Westropp, and I'll tell you what. It will be all the better for me too. You'll be twice as important a man in the House now, when you come to show up the whole villainy. By George, what an *exposé* it will be!"

"So far from that," said I, "you will be sorry to hear I must give up Parliament at once and for ever."

"What! give it up—give up Parliament! I hope it's only one of your jokes."

"I never was more serious in my life, I'm sorry to say."

"Then I'm afraid all my chances are gone;"—and his countenance fell wonderfully.

"Well, you know, captain, I did not see my way clearly to bringing your case before the House. I told you that already. But I have some pleasanter news for you. Lofthouse and I have just arranged between us to settle four hundred a year on my mother, so that you won't have a pauper for your wife."

"400*l.* a year!—400*l.* a year!—is it for her life?"

"Yes."

"Sir, you are a trump—you are a gentleman. Lord Lofthouse and you are worthy of the positions you fill. Four hundred a year!"—And he grasped my hand with enthusiasm.

Seeing him in such high spirits, I thought I might now safely introduce the dreaded subject.

"Yes, I knew it would make your mind easier.—By-the-by, you must not be surprised if Mr. O'Connell should happen to be a guest at our wedding breakfast."

This tremendous announcement completely overwhelmed him.

"O'Connell! O'Connell at my wedding breakfast! Is it Dan O'Connell himself? the great O, as they call him?"

"I expect that honour."

"Honour? Begad, that's not so bad! I see clearly there's a worm in the bud. Dan O'Connell! Why I'd as soon meet the Old Boy himself."

"Oh, that's because you don't know him. I'm sure you'll be excellent friends when you meet."

"Meet?—is it meet Dan O'Connell?"—and he broke into a sarcastic laugh, that resembled the neighing of a horse. "I hope you have got long spoons—that's all."

"Why do you ask that?"

"Oh, they say when you sup with the Devil you should have a long spoon. There's certainly a worm in the bud. Dan O'Connell at my wedding breakfast! Well, that beats anything I ever heard in my life."

He relieved his feelings by a long low whistle, and seemed lost in a vain attempt to grasp the whole significance of such an extraordinary proposition. This shock had the effect of completely banishing from his mind for some time

the gratifying news I had just given him about his bride.

A few words, suggested by the captain's horror and bewilderment, may not be out of place here. Considering the universal respect in which the memory of O'Connell has long been held, it may surprise the reader to learn the disparaging estimate of him that prevailed during his lifetime, not merely among monomaniacs like Captain Etchingham, but among many enlightened Protestants, and, worse still, among some "superior persons" of his own faith, who, in their affectation of style and fashion, were snobbish enough to sneer at the intrepid champion of their liberties. O'Connell was one of those powerful and many-sided characters who are best judged of, long after their own day. In estimating the colossal worker, let us remember that we are only now beginning rightly to see the results of his work. Largely as the oppressed millions of his co-religionists have benefited by his labours, it is now admitted by reasonable Protestants that they owe him not less a debt of gratitude,¹ for relieving them from the burden of an invidious, odious, and unjust ascendancy. Few who study his complex life will deny that, with some faults of character and temper inseparable from so vehement a nature, he was a very good as well as a very great man. And already much has been

¹ In making these remarks, of course I only refer to his great work, the carrying of Catholic Emancipation. His advocacy of Repeal is a subject on which the world will always differ, but all must agree in admiring his hearty and emphatic condemnation of criminal methods throughout the whole of that great agitation.

done towards forming a right conception of him. His own playful expression that he was "the best abused man in Europe" conveys no idea of the tempest of obloquy and hatred that followed his every step during his lifetime, and continued to roar and bellow over his grave. But, like every truly great man, he appealed to "Time the Avenger;"—and the appeal has not been in vain. I am thankful that I have lived to see all ranks and classes joining cordially together to celebrate his centenary, in the very city in which some thirty years before I had seen him imprisoned as a traitor. Such universal homage is not granted by posterity to the rarest gifts and achievements, when unaccompanied by the higher attributes of moral greatness. Let it be remembered that, while it has been cheerfully rendered to O'Connell, as well as to Washington and Wellington, it has been sternly denied to Marlborough and Napoleon, and, in spite of much powerful advocacy, only partially and grudgingly conceded of late to Oliver Cromwell.

To resume.—Our old house in Baggot Street had never been taken since we left it. I had often sighed to think that it should be abandoned altogether to the ghosts of memory, and it was a source of the highest pleasure to me that my mother and Captain Etchingham now made it their abode. For my own residence I fixed on a fine house in Fitzwilliam Square, the landlord of which, curiously enough, was the legal representative and nearest of kin of the late Jane Broadhurst, whose death had led to results of such vast importance to my family. Here I left

painters, decorators, and upholsterers excessively busy during my wedding tour to Paris ; but it was from the Baggot Street house, endeared to us by so many old memories and associations, that both marriages were celebrated.

Of the presents made to the brides, and the dresses of the brides and bridesmaids, I shall say nothing. Men, not measures—were they even the measures of tailors or milliners—are my motto. My “best man,” an indispensable functionary on such occasions, was Malachi Fitzsimon. That conventional title is sometimes poorly enough earned ; but in my case, at all events, it would have been impossible to select a better or truer friend than the attorney who had so often got me out of scrapes, and whose thoughtful kindness had given me a fair start in my profession, which circumstances did not require me to follow up.

The appearance of Mr. O’Connell caused a strange flutter of excitement among some of my guests, and a certain amount of uneasiness, nay consternation, among others ; but they soon had occasion to wonder whither the O’Connell of Tory tradition had flown—he was so utterly unlike the O’Connell of fact ! Really great men are usually the most agreeable of companions, and O’Connell, whose whole life may be said to have passed in the storm of conflict, revelled in the consciousness of the ease with which he could overcome social prejudice. Taking the bull by the horns, I boldly introduced Captain Etchingham to him as a Peninsular and Waterloo veteran.

"Sir," said he, grasping my father-in-law by the hand, "I am happy to make your acquaintance. Your scars speak for you. I always like to meet a hero."

The poor captain was probably overawed by something in the commanding figure before him, and, knowing that he was on his good behaviour with a guest at his own table, but still unable to comprehend a situation so wonderful, he lost all his volubility, and could only stammer out—"Thank you, thank you." He was as one dazed and spellbound, and evidently thought his marriage a mere trifle compared with a meeting so portentous.

O'Connell paid a few happy compliments to my mother, who asserted ever afterwards that there was good blood in the O'Connells, though I had never known her make the discovery before. He took especial pains to make himself agreeable to Maud, on whose mind he quickly produced the most favourable impression.

"I have always admired you so much, Mr. O'Connell," said she, "that I freely forgive you for having kept my husband running after moonbeams for years."

"And I, my dear," was the gallant reply, "am prepared to love you so much, that I forgive you even for stealing him from the cause of Ireland."

There is always something peculiarly interesting in seeing the lion at play. The mighty tribune, whose fame rested on the achievements of half a century—who had "wielded at will the fierce democracy," and the thunders of whose eloquence had resounded throughout the civilized

world—claimed all the more respect and attention now because he was not what he had been, because the matchless voice was less powerful, and the kingly frame less stalwart, than of old. As the loving cup began to circulate, he rose to propose a toast.

Of O'Connell's robust and many-sided intellect a certain rough playful humour was the most unfailing characteristic ; and this humour, too apt to degenerate into scurrility amidst the fierce contests of public life, had a rare charm when, as now, it was softened and chastened by the amenities of social intercourse. I venture to report the speech ;—but ah ! who could ever report the speaker ? Where is the voice, the eye, the leer, the manner ? What ghost come from the grave, Horatio, can give us these ?

“ As the oldest man, perhaps, in the room—and certainly the most notorious—(*laughter*), I call upon you to fill your glasses, and drink the healths of my dear friends Mr. and Mrs. Westropp (*loud cheers*). I am somewhat of a public man, as you may have happened to have heard (*laughter*), and I confess I felt no little regret at losing the services of the member for Gulgreina, who, I inform you in strict confidence, has accepted the—the Chiltern Hundreds (*laughter*) ; but if I have lost him, you will all admit he has been well found (*great cheers*). I am sure he could not have fallen into safer or pleasanter custody than that of the beautiful young lady whom I have had the pleasure of meeting to-day for the first time, but of whose charms I have heard much from other sources (*cheers, and blushing on the part of Maud*). They can't

expect their lives to be free from trouble, but Mrs. Westropp may always console herself with the reflection that the duties of her husband's new office will scarcely tend to shorten his life (*laughter*). But we have another interesting event to-day (*hear, hear*). I see before me a second couple whose welfare you have all at heart. Captain and Mrs. Etchingham are new friends to me ; but I hope yet to call them old friends (*loud cheers*). The excellent lady whom I venture to include in the toast represents the purest blood of the County Clare ;—and as for Captain Etchingham, which of you has not heard of his gallant deeds ? Does he not still bear upon his scarred front proofs of his valour at Badajoz and Waterloo (*enthusiastic cheering*). I always respect a veteran who has bled for his country. I have attacked the Duke of Wellington, indeed—but why ? Simply because he was ashamed of Ireland. Oh, is she not a beautiful country ? Surely none of you will ever be ashamed of her ? (*continued cheering, and cries of 'never'*). I take the liberty, therefore, while I am on my legs, of killing four birds with one stone (*great laughter*). My brain can't be quite as clear as it used to be, for I don't exactly understand the degrees of relationship between the various parties, senior and junior, who have just paired off ;—but it is satisfactory to know that none of them come within the category in the English book of common prayer, beginning —' A man may not marry his grandmother ' (*great laughter*). God bless them all ! Whatever our differences, none of them will be the worse of a blessing from an old man, even

though he may be considered the most dangerous man in the empire (*loud cheers*). Before I sit down, let me give expression to a hope, which will sound strangely from me, above all men—that you may never live to witness a Repeal of either of *these* Unions.”

In our days of utilitarian, if somewhat cynical culture, speech-making on merely festive occasions is out of fashion, and newly married couples usually hurry off from church to catch the first train, and rush with infatuation into the delights of sea-sickness. Perhaps on the whole this is all the better ; but I may be pardoned for retaining a sneaking regard for the ancient barbarism. The eloquence that graced my wedding breakfast, at least, was not exerted in vain. The wide wall of demarcation that has so long separated man from man in Ireland is well known ; but, lo ! the great agitator uplifted his clarion voice, and in a moment the wall of demarcation was swept away, like the walls of Jericho before the blast of the trumpet. His compliments proved as effective as they were felicitous. The old prejudices that some of my guests had cherished against him were changed into cordial admiration under the magnetic power of genius ; my mother was deeply touched by his allusion to the purity of her County Clare blood, and the most singular phenomenon of all was observable in Captain Etchingham. After briefly returning thanks in his peculiar fashion, that gentleman showed that he had at last solved the mystery that had perplexed him, by rushing over to the orator, and seizing him warmly by the hand, as he said—

"Mr. Dan O'Connell, I have heard a great deal about you, but I never understood you rightly till now. I was mistaken, sir. I told Jack Westropp there was a worm in the bud—"

"And you have found a whole boa constrictor, I suppose?"

"No, sir, I have found A MAN—a man that I'll always be proud to call a friend. They tell all sorts of stories about you—and I believed them, like a fool. I may honestly say I thought you as great a vagabond as Bonaparte, or my brother the Colonel, but faith I find you one of the best fellows in the world."

This, too, in its way was eloquence. When I heard those words, I felt that I had eclipsed the feat of Boswell!

The festivities over, we went our several ways to be happy;—not without success, as far as the present autobiographer is concerned. Mayst thou too, O Reader, fare equally well in the like interesting circumstances, if they have yet to befall thee, and mayst thou find, in the words of a sentiment proposed that day by the model toastmaster, old Mun, "the fires of affection lighted by the torch of Hymen, and the flowers of domestic happiness blooming in the gardens of purity and peace!"

THE END.





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